

A THEMATIC ANALYSIS OF LOVE IN
LE SOULIER DE SATIN AND LA CANTATE A TROIS VOIX
BY PAUL CLAUDEL

MOTHER LUCILLE NICOLAIS, O. S. U.

A

842.9

C57szN

A THESIS SUBMITTED TO THE FACULTY OF THE

GRADUATE SCHOOL OF ARTS AND SCIENCES OF THE

CATHOLIC UNIVERSITY OF AMERICA

This dissertation was approved by

Herbert A. Harkness

Professor of Romance Languages, as director, and by

as reader,

Geoffrey W. Roberts

A Dissertation submitted to the Faculty of the
Graduate School of Arts and Sciences of the
Catholic University of America in Partial
Fulfillment of the Requirements for
the Degree of Master of Arts.

May, 1964

Washington, D. C.

This dissertation was approved by _____,
Helmut A. Hatzfeld

Professor of Romance Languages, as director, and by

_____, as reader.
Gabrielle M. Rogers

A-THematic ANALYSIS OF LOVE-IN

LE SOULIER DE SATIN AND LA CANTATE A TROIS VOIX

BY PAUL CLAUDEL

by

Mother Lucille Nicolais, O. S. U.

A Dissertation submitted to the Faculty of the
Graduate School of Arts and Sciences of The
Catholic University of America in Partial
Fulfillment of the Requirements for
the Degree of Master of Arts.

May, 1964

Washington, D. C.

A THESIS SUBMITTED TO THE

UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA IN PARTIAL FULFILLMENT OF THE

REQUIREMENTS FOR THE

DEGREE OF DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY

BY

JOHN EDWARD HARRIS

OF

THE

SCHOOL OF THEORETICAL PHYSICS

A DISSERTATION SUBMITTED TO THE FACULTY OF THE
GRADUATE SCHOOL OF LETTERS AND SCIENCES OF THE
UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA IN PARTIAL
FULFILLMENT OF THE REQUIREMENTS FOR
THE DEGREE OF DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY

1954
Berkeley, California

Quarto

PQ

2605

.L2

S63

PREFACE 1

INTRODUCTION 1

Chapter

I. THE FIRST LEVEL OF LIFE 10

II. THE SECOND LEVEL OF LIFE 22

III. THE THIRD LEVEL OF LIFE 44

CONCLUSION 56

BIBLIOGRAPHY 59

105491

CONTENTS

PREFACE	Page 1
INTRODUCTION	1
Chapter	
I. THE FIRST LEVEL OF LOVE	10
II. THE SECOND LEVEL OF LOVE	22
III. THE THIRD LEVEL OF LOVE	44
CONCLUSION	55
BIBLIOGRAPHY	59

¹Barbara Selma, "Paul Claudel: Prisoner and the Satan Slipper," *Renascence*, VII (1955), 277.

PREFACE

The symbolism of love in Claudel's works has for its basic theme, the gradual sublimation of a purely human love, even of a love basely illegitimate, into a love which is altruistic, self-sacrificing and wholly sublime. These pages propose to study this sublimation as it occurs on its three levels or stages of readiness. An Introduction includes the general themes and background; three Chapters analyze the devices, vocabulary, and symbolism proper to each level of love found in Le Soulier de Satin and La Cantate à Trois Voix.

In this present work, love is seen as principal protagonist, so a unifying element was sought to relate the various parts to the whole. In both Claudelian works considered, love's symbols are myriad; but one has been chosen -- that of the sea. In Claudel's thought, the sea represents God as Alpha and Omega -- the beginning and the end.¹ Nature itself provides the analogy; as rain is swept from the sea to water the land and then flows back to the sea, so, love in a man, finds its source in God and its ultimate end. The setting of La Cantate à Trois-Voix, has been taken to provide the leit-motif. As in this poem, love's song is ever attune with the murmuring Rhone flowing into the sea, so in these pages, love is followed as it traces its course from tiny springs to sea-swept shores.

The writer gratefully acknowledges the guidance and interest of Dr. Helmut Hatzfeld in inspiring and directing this study.

¹Barbara Selna, "Paul Claudel: Prison and the Satin Slipper," Renascence, VII (1955), 177.

INTRODUCTION

"Les connais-tu à présent , ces
eaux où je voulais te conduire?"
(Soulier de Satin, III, 8)

The mysterious paths of love are intertwined as they trace out the relationship between human and divine love, between the finite and the infinite. Paradoxically, time itself and its creaturely attachments must shape man to his destiny when time itself will be no more.

Three levels of love plot out the course from finiteness to infinity as man gradually realizes his ultimate longing for the divine. On the first level, he senses the incompleteness of his love based on sensual pleasure. He realizes that his horizons are limited, that he is not fulfilling the role proper to him. He feels himself to be superficial, fragmented, uneasy, unstable. The void created by human love can be filled with the divine although he can realize this only partially and confusedly. Consenting to some form of purification, the lover crosses the threshold from the first level of love to the second level. Quite often, it involves a period of separation, even voluntary separation. Total renunciation plays its part too, in the cleansing of love which is either illegitimate or too exclusively bound to the human. The third level, involving total self-sacrifice, brings the soul in proximate contact with God after its detours through paths of human love. The soul's fullest response to God is required in its ultimate union with Him who is Love.²

By means of a gradual detachment, the Claudelian woman strips herself of the dross of her sensual desires in order to put on the garment of selfless charity. Her inner transformation then reacts upon her beloved. Becoming an instrument of salvation, she evolves into a strong figure who draws her beloved away from his pre-

²Sister Francis Ellen Riordan, The Concept of Love in the French Catholic-Literary Revival (Washington, D. C., 1952), p. 145.

dominantly selfish and passionate interests for her. Slowly renouncing her own sensual love, she wins the strength for him to follow her to their common end in God. Such a type is Doña Prouhèze.

In this study, parallels will be drawn by comparing Doña Prouhèze, the heroine of Claudel's Le Soulier de Satin, with the three young women appearing in his poem, La Cantate à Trois Voix; Laeta, Fausta, and Beata. These women each represent one of the three levels of love through which Prouhèze painfully advances in her quest for the divine.

Prouhèze, in her initial love of Rodrigue, is willing and is, in fact desirous of giving her whole being to him, despite the obstacle of her marriage bond with Don Pélage.³ Yet, she is always aware that her overwhelming desire to be with Rodrigue is not in consonance with her duty as a Christian. She experiences shame and horror for her illicit passion in her words to Don Balthasar:

Ah! cela me touche plus que tout le reste.
 Oui, l'idée de trahir ainsi l'Afrique et notre pavillon,
 Et l'honneur du nom de mon mari,
 Je sais qu'il ne peut se passer de moi.
 Ces tristes enfants que j'ai recueillis,
 à la place de ceux que Dieux ne m'a pas donnés....
 Je peux dire que cela me fait horreur.⁴

In fact, her astonishment at her own immoral inclinations leads her to implore Don Balthasar:

Alors du moins, liez-moi, ne me laissez
 pas cette cruelle liberté!
 Mettez-moi dans un cachot profond derrière
 des barres de fer!

(SS, I, 5)

Even while Prouhèze is on her way to the inn where she had secretly asked Rodrigue to join her, she prays to the Virgin to keep her from the evil pleasures

³The same situation exists between Ysé and Amalric in Claudel's Partage de - Midi.

⁴Paul Claudel, Le Soulier de Satin (Gallimard, 1929), I, 5. (The Roman numerals refer to the Days; Arabic numbers to the Scenes; all subsequent references to this work will be indicated as: SS.)

she desires. After placing her slipper on the Virgin's hand, she pleads:

Vièrge mère, gardez dans votre main mon
malheureux petit pied.

.....
Mais quand j'essayerai de m'élancer vers le mal,
que ce soit avec un pied boiteux! la barrière que
vous avez mise,
Quand je voudrai la franchir, que ce soit avec
une aile rognée!

(SS, I, 5)

Struggling beneath the tension arising from her sense of duty to her husband and her overwhelming passion, Prouhèze is at first, inclined to satisfy her lower appetites. Yet, at the same time that she knows her desires to be immoral, she knows nevertheless, that she is somehow destined by God to lead Rodrigue toward Him. Her very being cries out:

Un tel désir m'a-t-il été donné pour le mal?
Une chose si fondamentale, comment peut-être mauvaise?

(SS, II, 4)

How can her seemingly opposed duties be reconciled within her? How can she remain faithful to her husband and still be instrumental in Rodrigue's salvation? The voice that calls her to Rodrigue becomes more and more insistent:

Quand mon maître m'appelle, il ne suffit que trop
à retenir cette âme, contre tout droit, qui est à lui,
Mon âme qu'il appelle et qui lui appartient!

(SS, I, 5)

Although Prouhèze is aware of her vocation to lift Rodrigue to the sublime, she submerges this awareness beneath her passionate love for him. Her attraction toward him is fostered primarily by carnal desire rather than by an altruistic sense of responsibility for his soul. Sensual desire, then, is the first level of love experienced by Prouhèze.

The corresponding level of love found in La Cantate à Trois Voix, is personified in Laeta. Born of a Latin background, Laeta is a young girl engaged to be married. She yearns with all her being to be united to her beloved whom she expects to come. Desire, yearning, expectancy, characterize her as they also charac-

terize Prouhèze. Both women live in the future; for then, both hope to fulfill their cherished hopes of union with the beloved. The present moment has meaning only in so far as it contains thousands of possibilities for the future. Laeta's situation, however, is a moral and legitimate one, but she is unable to look beyond her level of love. In her "Cantique du Rhone" Laeta expresses her yearning:

Car à quoi servent les pieds sinon à se joindre à la
course qui les entraîne? et le cœur
Sinon à compter le temps et attendre la seconde imminente?
Et la voix, sinon à joindre la voix qui a commencé avant elle?
Et la vie, sinon à être donnée? et la femme sinon à être une
femme entre les bras d'un homme?

Prouhèze voices the same passionate desire:

Rodrigue, je suis à toi! Rodrigue, je vais à toi!

(SS, I, 12)

Despite her unregulated passions, Prouhèze begins to realize her true end in God even when she is on the very threshold of satisfying her sensuality. After escaping from the inn where Don Balthazar has her under his surveillance, Prouhèze scrambled frantically up a steep incline, forcing her way through brambles, pitfalls, and thickets. Her one thought is that now she can save Rodrigue from death. She knows that he lies seriously wounded in his mother's secluded castle; she knows that she will only have to gaze upon him to cure him. Yet, having arrived at the castle, Prouhèze demurs; she does not go to see Rodrigue, although he repeats her name over and over in his troubled sleep.

Meanwhile, Don Pélage has caught up with Prouhèze and demands to be taken to his errant spouse. Upon meeting her, he asks her what kind of happiness she expects to give Rodrigue if he does live. Prouhèze declares that she can only bring him the happiness of one word, a word which will prevent him from hearing any other.

⁵Claudel, *La Cantate à Trois Voix* (Gallimard, 1948), p. 34. (All subsequent references to this work will be indicated as: CTV, followed by the page number.)

This word, continues Prouhèze, is her soul. Her husband's quick retort reveals the situation as it really exists. He declares that she can give her soul to Rodrigue only if it is totally hers to give. But she cannot give to Rodrigue what she has delivered forever into another's hands. He, her husband, has been entrusted with her person. Finally realizing the seriousness of her marriage vows, Prouhèze assures Don Pélage that there is not a movement in her body which would tell him that she no longer belongs to him. Furthermore, she clearly apprehends the truth of her husband's words. If she were to give herself to Rodrigue, she would not be giving her real self but only an idolatrous substitute set up by her own hand. She could never satisfy him fully, for she is limited by her vowed loyalty to another.

Notwithstanding her moral obligations, however, Prouhèze still retains an unbounded desire for Rodrigue and, in addition, expects him to desire her. She does not think her desire immoral, for she believes it to have divine origin. After Don Pélage insists that what does no good can only be evil, Prouhèze asks if it is true that she can only be the cause of Rodrigue's damnation. Pélage assures her that she can do him the most good by simply doing things good in themselves, by doing her duty, by being faithful to her marriage contract. In fact, she can do Rodrigue positive good if she would agree to renounce him, to leave him, and to follow her husband's plans.

Prouhèze accepts the challenge with regret, but she sets out for Africa where she is destined to defend the fortress of Mogador. Knowing that now, she will have only her memories of Rodrigue, she relinquishes any future hope of meeting him on earth. The constellation of Saint James, from its vantage point in the sky, looks down upon the two lovers who sail away from each other—one bound for Africa, the other for America. They are separating one from another, and yet, they follow one another. Realizing that the earth will never witness their union, they both look up to heaven to find their roots there.

Prouhèze's second attitude of love exhibits a moral advancement from her first one. Physical union is seen as impossible. It no longer forms the basis of her thoughts or yearnings. The earthly desire for the beloved still exists, but its realization is forsaken. Physical separation is embraced voluntarily by Prouhèze even when Rodrigue, sent to Mogador by the King, demands to see her. At first, his insistence for an audience with her gains for him a curt note: "Je reste. Partez." Then, their shadows merge on the wall--symbol of their spiritual relationship. A single word seals their mutual kinship on earth--"never"--this one word of frustrated love. Henceforth, human pleasures are impossible for them.

Rodrigue, however, still nourishes his fleshly desires; he is a lamp, fed by the oil of his desire; yet, he is a lamp which will never shed light because it is frustrated in its devouring flame:

C'est par elle que je me nourris de toi comme
la lampe fait de l'huile,
De cette huile dont brûlera éternellement,
cette lampe qui ne réussit pas à en faire de la lumière.

(SS, II, 14)

In this second level of love, Prouhèze finds her prototype in Fausta, a young woman separated from her husband. Fausta's short married life was happy; but now, her husband is away from her and is confronted with continual perils. Her future encompasses nothing but apprehensions and fears. From day to day, her life is shrouded in hopelessness. She finds her happiness in retrospect, however, and she always keeps in mind loving thoughts for her husband in his hardships. Possessing no hope, she is envelopped by the past; she is steeped in her memories. Renouncing desire, she embraces regret; relinquishing hope, she courts despair.

J'ai sauvé du temps qui passe l'amour

.....
C'est en vain que la distance et le sort nous divisent!
Je n'ai qu'à rentrer dans mon coeur pour être avec lui
et qu'à fermer les yeux
Pour cesser d'être en ce lieu où il n'est pas.
Cette liberté du moins, je la lui ai retirée, et il
ne dépend pas de lui de ne pas être avec moi.

Et je ne sais s'il m'aime, ses desseins me sont
inconnus et l'accès de sa pensée m'est interdit.

(OTV, 52, 54)

From a carnal love unfilled by choice, Prouhèze gradually advances towards the reality of a fulfilled spiritual love. Her entrance into this highest level of love occurs slowly. There is no rapid metanoia, nor is there an abrupt overthrow of her former feelings of unfilled love. She firmly believes that Rodrigue has been created for her:

Oui, oui! Oui, je crois du fond de mon cœur
que c'est pour moi qu'il a été créé et mis au monde.

(SS, III, 8)

Little by little, Prouhèze realizes that she is Rodrigue's means of salvation. Rodrigue's attraction for her will make him less proud and less egotistical. The angel speaks to Prouhète about him:

Cet orgueilleux, il n'y avait pas
d'autre moyen de lui faire comprendre le
prochain, de le lui entrer dans la chair;

(SS, III, 8)

The purification of Prouhèze's carnal love is seen in her uneasiness over Rodrigue's love for her; but her angel declares: "Sin also serves." While it is not good that Rodrigue desires her, still, his illicit love teaches him to be dependent upon someone other than himself: "Il était bon que tu lui apprennes le désir." (SS, III, 8)

Prouhèze, as a necessary instrument for Rodrigue's salvation, is to be for him, a star—a star which guides and illumines from afar off. Prouhèze, recognizing and accepting her vocation, rejects the desires of her former love; she rejects the false image of herself that she had fabricated from illusion and sin; she rejects all that is not sealed by the living imprint of God. The heights of self-sacrificing love are manifested by Prouhèze in her last encounter with Rodrigue. Her counsels to him reveal the sublimity of her renunciation; she has given all; she has taken nothing for herself; yet, she has gained all in her sacrifice.

Sois généreux à ton tour! ce que
j'ai fait, ne peux-tu le faire à ton tour?
Dépouille-toi! Jette tout!
Donne tout afin de tout recevoir!
Si nous allons vers la joie, qu'importe
que cela soit ici bas à l'envers de notre
approximation corporelle?

(SS, III, 13)

Now purified, Prouhèze's love for Rodrigue stems essentially from her love of God. Her only desire is to give him this God with whom she is filled so completely.

Je veux être avec toi dans le principe! Je veux
épouser ta cause! je veux apprendre avec Dieu à
ne rien réserver, à être cette chose toute bonne et
tout donnée qui ne réserve rien et à qui l'on prend tout!

Prends, Rodrigue, prends mon coeur, prends mon
amour, prends ce Dieu qui me remplit!
La force par laquelle je t'aime n'est pas
différente de celle par laquelle tu existes.
Je suis unie pour toujours à cette chose qui
te donne la vie éternelle!

(SS, III, 13)

United completely with God, Prouhèze loves Rodrigue in God. Hers is a pure love of friendship, a love whose principal end is God, a love which reaches out to the beloved in a wish for his highest good, a love which ultimately wishes the union of the beloved with God. Having renounced physical union with Rodrigue in this life, Prouhèze thereby attains spiritual union with him in the mystery of divine love.

Prouhèze has realized that by doing the things suggested by self-love, she ignores God and frustrates her own happiness which is necessarily bound up in God. She has realized that God is the only end of her being; and that by doing the things of God, she reaches Him, and so fulfills herself as a person. Possessing God, she possesses all things.

This last and most perfect level of love attained by Prouhèze can be compared to the attitude of Beata in La Caritate à Trois Voix. Beata, a native of Egypt, is a widow whose husband died soon after their marriage. For Beata, the past cannot

be re-lived and the future holds nothing; there is only the present. In contrast to Leata and Fausta, Beata seizes the present moment, this instant of time which is somehow linked to the eternal now. Having no regrets for the past or hopes for the future, Beata simply accepts her state. Rising above passing things, she is rooted in eternal things. Having lost her beloved, she possesses him anew in the ceaseless now of eternity. With Prouheze, Beata has true possession which ever renews itself in the depths of her being.

"...C'est la région des sources où
change gentils d'eau qui bouillit
sans cesse les pentes qui lui sont
offertes..."

(22, 171, 1)

In analyzing the stylistic characteristics of the first level of love, it is interesting to note that several elements serve to emphasize its hedonism, its sensuality and its spiritual degeneracy. These elements, characterized by the juxtaposition of pleasure and duty, reveal the predominant role of fleshly pleasure in the context of the works considered. In the case of illegitimate love, the imbalance between pleasure and duty is quickly perceptible; duty, far outweighed by pleasure, serves to underscore the animality of the initial love between Frodo and Sam. Frodo seems quite willing to set aside her marriage vows for the gratification of a few moments of pleasure. In the case of legitimate love between Leata and her betrothed, the foremost duty of man and woman to God is subservient to their human happiness.

A predominant theme linked to the portrayal of pleasure is the relationship between the sexes. Depicted in broad, blatant strokes, this relationship reveals man chiefly as the agent, as the one who acts; whereas, woman is usually presented as the one who is acted upon. Man's nature is stylistically sketched by strong substantives; his actions are portrayed by powerful predicates.

Man is a possessor whose arms, all-encompassing, grasp all to himself. As the "traveller" (22, 30), he emerges as the dashing young man whose life is resolved

CHAPTER ONE

THE FIRST LEVEL OF LOVE

"...Cette région des sources où
chaque goutte d'eau qui tombe hé-
site entre les pentes qui lui sont
offertes..."

(SS, III, 1)

In analysing the stylistic characteristics of the first level of love, it is interesting to note that several elements serve to emphasize its baseness, its sensuality and its spiritual depravity. These elements, characterized by the juxtaposition of pleasure and duty, reveal the predominate role of fleshly pleasure in the outset of the works considered. In the case of illegitimate love, the imbalance between pleasure and duty is quickly perceptible; duty, far outweighed by pleasure, serves to underscore the animality of the initial love between Prouhèze and Rodrigue. Prouhèze seems quite willing to set aside her marriage vows for the promise of a few moments of pleasure. In the case of legitimate love between Laeta and her betrothed, the foremost duty of man and woman to God is subservient to their human happiness.

A predominate theme linked to the portrayal of pleasure is the relationship between the sexes. Depicted in broad, blatant strokes, this relationship reveals man chiefly as the agent, as the one who acts; whereas, woman is usually presented as the one who is acted upon. Man's nature is stylistically sketched by strong substantives; his actions are portrayed by powerful predicates.

Man is a possessor whose arms, all-embracing, grasp all to himself. As the "cavalier" (CTV, 30), he emerges as the dashing young man whose life is resolved

in sensual love. As "cet orgueilleux" (SS, III, 8), he stands before woman, proud and arrogant. As the "puissant lion" (CTV, 31), he stalks woman as prey. Man is supreme over woman; his sensual domination is paramount. One pregnant locution mirroring his stature in the first level is enunciated by Laeta who acknowledges her love and desire of man as dominator: "Que d'autres louent la rose et je louerai l'homme libre, imprénable, inattendu, le mâle, le maître, le premier, l'animateur." (CTV, 31)

Basic to his role as "le premier" and as "le maître," man is foremost, "l'animateur". On a natural level, woman is only the other "half"; she is not self sufficient, but is meant to complement man in the union of their beings. Her vocation can only be expressed in his. Laeta asks again and again:

Car à quoi sert d'être une femme sinon pour être cueillie?
Et cette rose sinon pour être dévorée? Et d'être jamais née
Sinon pour être à un autre et la proie d'un puissant lion?

(CTV, 30)

Que ferons-nous, qui ne puis être une femme qu'entre ses bras?...

(CTV, 44)

Man, when he is alone, also feels his lack of fulfillment on the natural level, but his desire for union lacks the implication of a permanent state of commitment. His, is only a temporary fulfillment. It is therefore in this direction that Rodrigue declares his intentions:

C'est son corps qu'il me faut, pas autre chose que son
corps, la scélérate complicité de son corps!
En jouir et m'en débarrasser! Je n'en serai pas débarrassé autrement.
Ensuite la rejeter...

(SS, II, 8)

This initial conviction does not distinguish between right and wrong. Laeta also reveals this tendency: "Car à quoi serve . . . la voix, sinon à joindre la voix qui a commencé avant elle?" (CTV, 34) In exactly the same way, Dona Prouhèze admits the beloved's rights over her to complete her as a being: "Qu'ai-je à moi qui ne lui appartienne?" (SS, I, 5)

As "le maître", man is primarily husband with the role of lord, of ruler, of

master, and so exercises his supremacy over the woman in an imperious sovereignty derived from the marriage bond. Don Balthazar therefore speaks to Doña Prouhèze of her husband: "C'est Don Pélage seul qui est votre gardien." (SS, I, 5) He it is who rules; his will, by necessity, becomes woman's pleasure by duty, not by love. Theoretically, Prouhèze recognizes her subordinate but tragic position with regard to her elderly, not-loved husband, when she explains to Balthasar:

. . . quand mon maître m'appelle, il ne suffit
que trop à retenir cette âme, contre tout droit, qui est à lui,
Mon âme qu'il appelle et qui lui appartient!

It is at this point that she becomes a "heroine." Laeta, less hampered by circumstances, echoes the same sentiments of Prouhèze when she speaks of her fiancé's claims over her:

Ah, qu'il me prenne sur son coeur et jamais ses bras
ne me paraîtront trop durs,
Et qu'il me tue s'il veut pourvu qu'il ne me laisse point
échapper!

One substantive can perhaps sum up the entire image of man as he plays his role in this first level of love. He is "le Mâle", the male whose essence lies completely in his sensual appetite for the female. More bestial than rational, his personality seems limited to animal drives. Living up to his "en-soi" as mammal, he does not reveal harmonious balance between matter and spirit to which he ought to be consonant. Acting in conformity to his instincts rather than to reason, man seems to live for raw animal pleasure. He does not even consider rationally, the biological-providential implications of his drives to change them into "romance."

In contrast to man's domineering personality seen in the first level of love, the woman, rarely characterized as an independent personality, appears primarily as a passive body, as the mere receiver of man's actions upon her. Utterly subservient to man, woman's vocation is limited to the physical fulfillment of their mutual pleasure. She is portrayed principally in terms of her

body which is the instrument destined to delight her lover. Consequently, the concepts of woman and her body seem to merge and assume a synonymous meaning.⁶

Representing for man, a vessel of pleasure, woman is de-personalized into a mere capacity. Her body becomes a potential giver and receiver of pleasure. It alone can fulfill man's craving or alleviate the aridity of his yearning, or furnish the inner glow of well-being. As "une coupe de vin", and even more so, as "une grande urne pleine d'un vin sans prix", (CTV, 30), woman is destined by her nature to pour out her hidden store upon her lover. The angel of Prouhèze hears her murmur: "Je sais que je suis un trésor pour lui." (SS, I, 12) Furthermore, woman is not "une amphore vacillante," (CTV, 42), but one which is always brimming over; her treasure remains ever renewed. Man has only to lift the pitcher to his lips and drink to satiety. Leeta rejects platonic friendship as an absurdity; "Ah, s'il ne veut pas épuiser la coupe, il ne faut pas y mettre les lèvres." (CTV, 42)

⁶A high spiritual tone informs much of *Le Soulier de Satin*, yet this tendency is vividly contrasted to the representation of the purely corporal which is on a rather low plane. Consequently, jarring references to the human body often appear. The liver is spoken of as "une enclume où les démons viennent forger le mensonge;" the lungs as "d'affreux soufflets;" the entrails as "un paquet de reptiles d'où s'échappe une vapeur infect et balsamique." (SS, I, 11)

Food is portrayed in glowing sensuous imagery; Don Balthazar describes the feast set on the table before him:

Le doux et le salé, ces coquillages bleus comme la
 nuit, cette belle truite rose sous sa peau d'argent comme
 une nymphe comestible, cette langouste écarlate,
 Ce rayon de miel, ces grappes translucides, ces figues
 trop sucrées qui s'entrouvrent, ces pêches comme des globes
 de nectar

(SS, I, 14)

Claudél seems to take pains to emphasize the dichotomy between flesh and spirit by these and other references which underline the purely material and sensuous aspects of matter. However, as the spiritual gains ascendancy in the work, the more material recedes into the background.

Yet, woman questions the quality of love in sensuality. She sees that she brings momentary satisfaction to man, but she foresees his eventual lassitude of soul arising from the disruption of harmony between matter and human spirit.

Doña Musique observes her role in her lover's eyes:

C'est moi, petite, oui; cette joie stupide sur
son vilain visage,
la justice dans son coeur, ce réjouissement sur sa face!

(SS, I, 10)

Doña Prouhèze replies: "Il n'y a rien pour quoi l'homme soit moins fait que le bonheur et dont il se lasse vite." (SS, I, 10)

The woman, weakened by her own sensuality and by her lack of personal dignity, capitulates to man's desires and compromises herself in order to fulfill them.

Following Prouhèze in her frantic flight through the brambles as she rushes to Rodrigue, her angel notes her passionate feelings: "Regardez . . . ce qu'il y a dans ce coeur désespéré!" (SS, I, 12)

The woman, unable to discover meaning in herself apart from man, gradually loses respect for herself. Doña Prouhèze refers to her body as "une dépouille," as slough, as cast-offs fit for nothing: "C'est une dépouille que l'on jette aux pieds de celui qu'on aime!" (SS, I, 5) Her personality becomes effaced by the pleasure she offers and it becomes tantamount with physical beauty. Her womanly nature is lost; her appearance counts for all. While speaking to his Chinese servant, Rodrigue admits his infatuation with the beauty of Prouhèze:

Mes sens. . . aient trouvé enfin la Beauté,
cette figure devant laquelle nous sommes si contents
de disparaître.

Tout ce que nous lui demandons est que nous
n'ayons plus pour toujours qu'à ouvrir les yeux pour
la retrouver.

.
Ce fut son visage que je vis en me réveillant.

(SS, I, 7)

Before sending Rodrigue to his difficult post in the colonies, the king resolves to have him gaze upon the face of Doña Prouhèze once again in order that

he be filled with her beauty and thus be stimulated in his love. Rodrigue is entranced with feminine beauty; but his servant, Isidore, is not. In woman, Isidore sees a purely corporal being destined to be preyed upon by demon, worm, and fire. His words again delineate the discrepancies between matter and spirit:

Qu'est-ce que cette femme que vous aimez? Au dehors cette bouche peinte comme avec un pinceau, ces yeux plus beaux que s'ils étaient des boules de verre, ces membres exactement cousus et ajustés?

Mais au dedans c'est le chagrin des démons; le ver, le feu, le vampire attaché à votre substance! La matière de l'homme qui lui est entièrement soutirée et il ne reste plus qu'une femme brisée et détendue comme un corpuscule de cricri, horreur!

.....
Que seront dans cent ans ces cent livres de chair femelle auxquelles votre âme s'est amalgamée comme avec un crochet?

Un peu d'ordure et de poussière, des os!

Further references to the human body, particularly woman's are quite repulsive, thereby underscoring the low regard in which it is held when considered apart from its informing spirit. In the meeting between Isidore and Jobarbara on the moonlit beach, Jobarbara alludes to herself in the following terms: ". . . je bondis comme un cochon, je claque comme un poisson, je tourne comme un petit canon!" (SS, I, 11) The observation seems to be mutual, for later on, Isidore calls her: "Impur alligator! enfant masqué de la boue et gros ver de marée basse!" (SS I, 11)

Separated from her lover, woman completely loses her sense of being. Her tortured desires, seeking him in an agonized but futile leap of spirit, are frustrated by the physical separation of body from body. Once a treasure in union, her body becomes but a prison in separation. It becomes woman's enemy, for it prevents the communion of being so ardently sought after: "Que parlez-vous de ce corps quand c'est lui qui est mon ennemi et qui m'empêche de voler d'un trait jusqu'à Rodrigue?" (SS, I, 5)

The relation of woman to man is that of servant to master. Utterly dependent upon his whims and fancies, woman must submit to him. Pélagie informs his wife unequivocally: "Vous êtes à moi tant que vous êtes capable de me rendre service." (SS, I, 5)

The subservience of woman to man elaborated by Claudel's use of substantives: visage; corps; coupe de vin; grande urne; trésor; dépouille; Beauté; ennemi; is brought out quite effectively by his use of predicates, too. Relating to man, these predicates show much fire, passion, utter domination. Relating to woman, they reveal acquiescence, submission, utter subservience.

Physical desire in varying degrees is the chief characteristic of the predicates referring to man's action on woman. Don Rodrigue manifests it to his servant: "Isidore, ah! si tu savais comme je l'aime et comme je la désire!" (SS, I, 7) Driven by his powerful desire, Rodrigue mocks anything remotely spiritual in Prouhèze which might frustrate his designs: "Je me moque de son âme! C'est son corps qu'il me faut, pas autre chose que son corps, la scélérate complicité de son corps!" (SS, II, 8) His passion for pleasure is foremost in his thoughts: "En jouer et m'en débarrasser!" (SS, II, 8) Rodrigue is accurately portrayed by the king who describes his burning passion with images suggesting fire. His heart burns; his spirit, devoured by flames, is compared to a hell where the eternal fires afford no rest: "Je me plais à ce coeur qui brûle et à cet esprit dévorant, à ce grief éternel qui ne laisse à l'esprit point de repos." (SS, II, 7) Don Pélage also recognizes the fiendish state of Rodrigue's passion which is encouraged by the king: "Si vous le plongez en enfer, ne craignez-vous pas qu'il y reste?" But the king loosely acquiesces, as it seems, to Rodrigue's self-damnation: "Tant pis! Lui-même l'a voulu . . ." (SS, II, 7)

The general tenor of the predicates used to characterize Rodrigue can be divided into four main categories which fall under general headings of: desire; acquisition; pleasure; rejection. The pattern demonstrated by these four themes is typical of a love based on physical attraction and sensual pleasure alone. The beloved is urgently sought; the lover yearns for her with all his being.

Rodrigue's triple cry for Prouhèze at Mogador shows the intensity of his desire:

Prouhèze, m'entendez-vous?
Prouhèze, Prouhèze, m'entendez-vous?

(SS, II, 2)

Once near his beloved, the lover takes her almost by force, so much is his eagerness for her. Laeta describes it thus in the "Cantique du Rhone": "Ah, qu'il la prenne déracinée et perdant l'âme entre ses bras." (CTV, 30) He takes her, leads her away, carries her off with him. Further on, without the hindrance implying adultery in Prouhèze, the biological triumph continues in Laeta: "Ah, s'il ne veut pas l'emmener, il ne fallait pas lui prendre la main!" (CTV, 44)

The king speaks of Don Rodrigue in relation to Prouhèze: ". . . qu'il l'emporte avec lui!" (SS, II, 7) When the beloved is finally in possession of the lover, the greatest pleasure is expected. The experience must be at the highest degree of enjoyment (en jouir); the cup of pleasure must be drained dry (épuiser la coupe); reeling pleasure must inundate the lover (qu'il s'en soule).

The final stage of this first level of love is reached in final rejection of the once alluring prize. Her mystery run out and drained dry, the beloved no longer appears as the tantalizing charmer. She is simply an empty container, useless, without attraction, a worthless vessel to be discarded, an oblation poured out upon fruitless ground.⁷ Rodrigue states unabashedly:

En jouir et m'en débarrasser! Je n'en serai pas
débarrassé autrement.
Ensuite la rejeter . . .

(SS, II, 8)

However this contempt is counteracted by the no less boundless desire of woman who, in this state, does not see her worthlessness, her loss of instrumentality after giving herself over to the passions of her lover: "Et qu'il me tue s'il veut . . ." (CTV, 30)

⁷Claudel, *Théâtre*, II *La Ville* (Mercure de France, 1920-1912), p. 294. Coeuvre too, notes man's lack of lasting happiness: "Pourquoi donc ne nous est-il pas permis de trouver satisfaction dans la femme? / D'où vient ce malentendu entre les sexes et cette séparation irréductible?"

The first level of love in the woman is not as clearly delineated, for it involves a more complex psychological progression than the one experienced by man. However, a faint pattern can be discerned in four movements of the woman's psyche. After a period of eager awaiting, there is a voluntary giving of self. Paradoxically enough, though, the self given by the woman is not considered as her own possession. She sees herself as a kind of chattel who does not find her true nature unless it is united to another. Once having found this desired union, she wishes for nothing else. She is complete in her nothingness. Verbs of desire, of hope, of earnest wish, stylize woman's innermost urge. Laeta exclaims: "Ah, qu'il me prenne sur son coeur . . ." (CTV, 30) Doña Prouhèze, in her passionate desire to be with her lover, admits to Don Balthasar that she sent a furtive letter to Rodrigue:

Prouhèze: Je ferais mieux de ne pas vous dire que j'ai envoye' cette lettre.

Balthasar: Une lettre à qui?

Prouhèze: A Don Rodrigue, oui, pour qu'il vienne me retrouve en cette auberge précisément où vous allez me conduire.

(SS, I, 5)

During her agonizing wait for her lover to return, Laeta demands: "Car à quoi servent les pieds sinon à se joindre à la course qui les entraine? et le coeur / Sinon à compter le temps et attendre la seconde imminente?" (CTV, 34) Eagerness and willingness characterize the gift of woman's whole self to man: "Je lui donnerais le monde entier si je le pouvais!" cries Prouhèze. (SS, I, 5) Further on in the play, she adds: "Si je me donne, est-ce autrement que tout entière?" Laeta manifests a similar eagerness:

Car à quoi servent . . . la voix sinon à joindre
la voix qui a commencé avant elle?
Et la vie, sinon à être donnée . . .

(CTV, 34)

Self-possession is not envisaged for woman in the first level of love. The consistent use of the possessive construction, être à, as applied to her, shows woman to be a shadow, lacking substance, lacking self-identity. Quite paradoxical-

cally, her being is wholly other; yet, it is swayed by selfish forces. Prouhèze cannot resist her lover's call:

. . . quand mon maître m'appelle,
il ne suffit que trop à retenir cette âme contre tout droit,
qui est à lui,

Mon âme qu'il appelle et qui lui appartient.

(SS, I, 5)

In her vision-like dream with her angel, she calls out to him: "Rodrigue, je suis à toi! . . . / Je sais que je suis un trésor pour lui." (SS, I, 12)

Breaking all barriers, she stops at nothing to be near him:

Rodrigue, je suis à toi! Tu vois que j'ai rompu
ce lien si dur!

Rodrigue, je suis à toi! Rodrigue, je vais à toi!

(SS, II, 12)

After the tremendous thrust of passion has abated, Prouhèze sees its debilitating effect upon her; but still, she is in its embrace, unable to escape its grasping tentacles. Reduced to nothingness, she has nothing with which to withdraw herself from her abysmal chasm, and so, she sinks deeper into her void. Her decision is marked in the following dialogue between Prouhèze and her angel:

L'ange: Voudrais-tu lui donner le mal?

Prouhèze: Oui, plutôt que de rester ainsi stérile et
inféconde, ce que tu appelles le mal.

L'ange: Le mal est ce qui n'existe pas.

Prouhèze: Unissons donc notre double néant.

(SS, III, 8)

United with Rodrigue, Prouhèze's nothingness can only be doubled for it implies an increase of moral evil, and therefore, a corresponding lack of goodness. Her human reasoning can derive no other alternative. Emptiness, void, fruitlessness, sterility, are then, the products of the first level of illegitimate love. Based purely on primitive drives, this initial love could not have resulted in any other end. Its mode of expression is wholly limited to the mire of ungraced human existence and cannot expect to be released from its clinging, grasping, fingers of clay.

Here, it is quite evident that Laeta cannot counterbalance Prouhèze in a consideration of their love. Laeta's love is after all, legitimate; the love of Prouhèze is not.⁸ The question may well be posed: how valid can the comparison between Laeta and Prouhèze be, since morality is necessarily contrary to immorality. Yet, considering the vast differentiating factors in human relationships, any love admits of various degrees.

The first level of love is concerned with human love in its relative exclusion of the divine. Although in different respects, both Laeta and Prouhèze failed to tend towards God. While Prouhèze, in her contemplated adultery, rejected Him, Laeta, nonetheless, disregarded Him. For her, her impending marriage with her betrothed is her whole purpose of existence. As Laeta is only able to attune her ear to the natural forces of the wind "tout bas" and "l'eau qui pleure," so her myopic spiritual vision prompts her to regard human love as an end in itself. Wherever her glance falls, Laeta seems to remember her forthcoming marriage; the Rhone valley resplendent with golden fields strikes within her the note of fruitfulness; the swift clouds traversing the somber sky remind her of the river boats often carrying among their passengers, newly-wedded couples; the clouds remind her too, of these same boats heavily laden with their cargoes of ripe grain:

C'est ainsi que sur le Rhin naguère
J'ai vu les barges chargées de foin, portant les nouveaux
mariés et leur cortège, sur le miroir des eaux resplendissantes.

(CTV, 63)

As the three young women in the Canticle await the coming of the dawn, the first breakthrough of the sun, they sit in quiet repose, their attention focused above, and their faces turned upwards. One critic has seen their vigil as symbolic of the soul's wait for the coming of Christ Who is the Sun of Justice in the

⁸Other Claudelian characters also image Laeta on a less virtuous level: Ysé (Partage de Midi), and Pensée (Le Père Humilié).

tradition of the Church's Advent liturgy—O Oriens; O Sol Justitiae:

It now becomes quite evident that every phrase of the opening lines of La Cantate à trois voix relates to this coming of the Sun, Christ. Laeta, Fausta, Beata, are Advent souls with one hour between them and the call of grace in the coming day, between germinal spring and fruitful summer. The whole person is gathered up into an alert, enraptured waiting. . . .⁹

As Laeta waits with her two companions, she describes their expectancy:

. . . Assises et demi-renversées
En robes solennelles
D'ou dépasse la pointe d'un pied doré!

(CTV, 18)

Laeta's reference to "un pied doré" may indicate a certain vanity or a certain concern with the material world which prevents her from wholly turning her attention to the divine. She again turns her thoughts to her future spouse: "Celui que j'épouse demain m'aimera-t-il toujours de même?" (CTV, 18) As if to underline the permanence of the material, she and Beata chant of the seasons, the fruits of the earth, the succeeding generations of men, but Beata seems to see beyond to the invisible world, while Laeta, hampered by her limited vision, rests in the visible one:

Beata: La fleur qui est déjà le fruit,
Laeta: Sémence de tout ce qui commence
Beata: Or de tout ce qui est fini!
.
Laeta: Le printemps qui expire,
Beata: Conduit à sa maturité,
Laeta: L'été sans fin à l'été,
Beata: Dans le don inextricable
Laeta: De l'être à l'être semblable,
Beata: Se passent l'immortalité!

(CTV, 69-72)

Laeta's basic concern and wrapt attention in the here and now of her sensual happiness, is then, her weakness which prevents her from turning to God. With her human love which was meant to be a kind of divine detour to the love of God, she made an impervious shield destined to shut out the light of his love. Along with Prouhèze, she remains on the natural level, never aspiring to rise higher.

⁹Riordan, p. 164.

CHAPTER TWO

THE SECOND LEVEL OF LOVE

"J'entends la Mer sans fin
qui brise sur ces rivages éternels."
(SS, III, 8)

The course of love, having its source in God, is shown by Claudel to advance slowly towards its end in God. Welling up from creative divine thought, love flows in man through ever-widening shores. Released from narrow tumultuous rapids, it courses on to wider, more silent streams, until it loses itself to intermingle with the expansive, plumbless sea-depths of divine love. As water naturally seeks its level, so human love would seem to seek out the level for which it was created, namely, the level where the divine inundates the human. On its way, man's love is often veered from its channel, trapped, or dammed over, but little by little, as it surges from its shoaled barriers, it acquires those characteristics identifying it, however remotely, with its divine counterpart. Before human love is totally "other" and immersed in the divine, however, it must endure an intermediary period of sublimation.

On this second level of love, self still predominates, yet it coexists with a strong sense of otherness, initiating a kind of intrinsic tension between self and other. Torn between powerful desires of both flesh and spirit, the soul struggles in a desperate attempt to achieve the delicate balance between them. This coexistence is even the subject of the Jesuit's prayer for his brother's salvation:

Et s'il désire le mal, que ce soit un tel mal qu'il ne soit compatible qu'avec le bien,
 Et s'il désire le désordre, un tel désordre qu'il implique l'ébranlement et la fissure de ces murailles autour de lui qui lui barraient le salut.

(SS, I, 1)

Strangely enough, this prayer apparently pleads for the intermingling of good with evil. But of what stuff can such a love be fashioned? If evil must exist, it must be only that objective not subjective evil which can be compatible with good. If disorder must be present, it must be only that disorder which will crack the terrible barriers keeping Rodrigue from salvation. Herein lies the core of Claudel's thought on evil, sin, and death. In his allusion to the oft-quoted proverb found at the beginning of Le Soulier de Satin: "Deus escreve direito por linhas tortas," Claudel recaptures the "etiam peccata" of St. Augustine—even sin serves. Caught up in an immense, almost overwhelming vision of cosmic entities, Claudel views the sanctifying role of every creature, of every good or of any void caused by the lack of goodness in man's state of "viator." In this sense, evil can be compatible with good for it may act as an instrument to gain a future good.

An analysis of this second level of love according to the stylistic traits employed, again shows how form enlivens content and quickens it. On this level of love, as on the first level, pleasure and duty are juxtaposed. However, while physical pleasure outbalanced duty on the first level, it is clearly challenged on this subsequent level. Sensual pleasure is seen as passing and ephemeral; physical presence is not as ardently sought; there is uncertainty of fulfillment. In his long talk to Isidore, Rodrigue insists: "Ce n'est point son corps chéri jamais qui réussirait à me contenter . . . mais plutôt ce besoin désespéré que j'ai de son âme." (SS, I, 7) Earthly contentment rising from earthly joys is no longer seen as paramount. Doña Prouhèze is asked by Doña

Musique: "Ne voulez-vous pas son bonheur?" Prouhèze replies: "Je veux qu'il souffre ainsi." (SS, I, 10)

In the course of the sublimation of the two loves, both elements of the first love are discernible: luxuriance in baseness and acceptance of spiritual depravity. Nevertheless, the rough, black outlines of these two factors have faded, so that now, they are not as sharply defined. Blatant statements regarding physical desire do not appear. The spiritual in man is recognized as a necessary note in him, and while man on this level cannot assent exclusively to divine values, he retains them as future goals. At no time, are they mocked outrightly.

Most worthy of note is the marked change in the relationship between the sexes. The previous position of man to woman as agent to passive receptor, no longer exists on this level. The woman slowly assumes the active role assigned to her as instrument in God's plan of salvation. She is still the giver of gladness, but now, the gladness expands beyond her and her lover. With varying degrees of success, the woman is able to direct her lover to another joy transcending them both. True, it will be a joy of sense pleasure mingled with spiritual pleasure, for the sublimation is not yet complete; yet, this higher joy marks the outset of joy found in God. In "Le Cantique du coeur dur," Fausta reviews what she will say to her husband when he returns from duty:

Qui est-tu? au nom de qui viens-tu? pourquoi
ce sourire étrange et ce visage composé?
Ne crois pas que je sois celle qu'on désarme avec
une nuit de printemps et ces fausses moissons!
.....
Dis! cette déception terrestre est-elle l'image
d'une autre plus parfaite?

(CTV, 75)

In contrast to the first level where man dominated woman, man sees on the second level, that he does not even dominate himself. In Rodrigue, there is an awareness of the terrible tensions tearing him apart. Were he either a saint or a totally depraved individual, he would have no difficulty in acting; he would

simply obey either his inspirations or his instinct as the case would be. He cynically remarks to Camille:

Pour un saint ou pour un homme de l'espèce que vous décrivez,

Tout est simple. L'esprit parle, le désir parle, c'est bien. En avant! il n'y a plus qu'à lui obéir aussitôt.

(SS, II, 11)

Rodrigue, quite correctly, considers himself neither total saint nor total sinner. He is a creature between the two, struggling to rise above the ever-pulling drag of body. The decision to relinquish the body and retain the spirit exclusively is still too difficult; for his spiritual desires are too caught up with the physical. Yet, there is an inexplicable element to his earthly love which he cannot understand, but which cries forth from his consciousness. Don Camille points out the two polarities in Don Rodrigue:

Vous vouliez satisfaire à la fois votre âme
et votre chair, votre conscience et votre penchant,
votre amour, comme vous dites, et votre ambition.

.....
N'est-ce pas une chose risible de vous voir demander
à la fois et d'un seul coup

L'assouvissement du corps et celui de l'âme?

(SS, II, 2)

But Don Rodrigue can neither distinguish nor choose between these two interior forces so intimately intertwined within him: "Est-ce ma faute si en moi les deux natures sont rejointes si fortement qu'elles ne font qu'un?" (SS, II, 2)

It would seem that on this second level, man's role in relation to woman revolves about three major themes which portray him as: "gentilhomme," as "mari," as "l'homme blessé." The coarse, brusque manners of man seen previously, now appear smoothed over, filed down. The substantive, "gentilhomme," occurs often, both in direct address and in incidental references.

As if to reinforce the courtly atmosphere surrounding the protagonists in Le Soulier de Satin, complete titles are now impressively assigned them: the French chancellor is referred to as, "Monsieur le Chancelier de France"; the

viceroy of Naples is addressed "Votre Altesse;" the archeologist is spoken to as "Monsieur le Savant;" the chaplain is "Monsieur le Chapelain;" the king is alternately: "votre Majesté," "Sire," "Monsieur le Roi." (SS, II, 9) The ship's captain speaks to Rodrigue as "Monseigneur;" Camille addresses him as "Votre Seigneurie." (SS, II, 11) Considered together, these titles, by their mere frequency, tend to suggest a note of dignity and grandeur which was lacking on the first level.

However, dignity is manifested not only by nobility of birth, but also by nobility of soul. The attitude marked by the polished but sincere manners of polite society is broadened by genuine concern and consideration for others. The noble soul places itself last for the good of others. Fausta's husband endures a forced separation from his wife because of his devotion and duty to serve his Polish homeland—"une mission sans espoir l'appelât ailleurs." (CTV, 50) The good of the whole is subordinate to private happiness: "ce n'est pas seulement lui et moi, c'est tout un peuple en nous qui désire et qui est partagé." (CTV, 49)

Rodrigue's essential loftiness of soul, if at times latent, certainly shines forth when he rushed ahead, risking his own life and ambitions, in order to save the pilgrims from attack. Immediately, upon hearing gunfire, he rises to his feet and reaches for his sword: "Mon épée! Volons au secours de Monsieur saint Jacques!" (SS, I, 7) Later, Don Fernand thanks him warmly for his bravery but Rodrigue receives the accolade humbly with no immediate thought for himself.

Don Fernand: Seigneur cavalier, je vous remercie.

Don Rodrigue: Je suis heureux d'avoir pu sauver Monsieur Saint Jacques.

Don Fernand: Ce n'est nullement à Saint Jacques qu'en voulait Monsieur.

Don Rodrigue: Il s'est battu comme un gentilhomme et j'ai cru que je n'en viendrais pas à bout.

.....

Don Fernand: Vous sentez-vous sérieusement blessé?
 Don Rodrigue: Peu de chose. Donnez-moi l'une de ces
 voitures. Mon serviteur prendra soin de moi.
 (SS, I, 9)

Heroic stateliness of character, understanding, justice, discernment, are also credited to Rodrigue by his own soldiers who, while preparing for the long voyage to America, anxiously await news of their wounded leader.

Premier cavalier: Et toujours point de nouvelles de
 notre Achille?
 Deuxième cavalier: . . . Aucune nouvelle de l'homme.
 Don Gil: Je jure que je ne pars point sans le
 Seigneur Rodrigue . . .
 Premier cavalier: Rodrigue est un homme just envers tous.
 Deuxième cavalier: . . . Qui a les yeux ouverts quand il faut.
 Troisième cavalier: . . . Et fermés quand il est nécessaire.
 Il connaît le soldat, Messieurs!
 (SS, II, 1)

While man's image is substantially changed on this level from the "cavalier" to the suave "gentilhomme," his foremost image is that of "mari." Since Fausta, Prouhèze's direct counterpart on the second level, is a married woman enduring a painful separation from her husband, the image of man as "mari" is rather easily discerned in La Cantate à Trois Voix. As her husband never appears on the scene, his qualities do not appear directly, but must be approximated from the dialogue. As husband and wife, the two were together only one day: "Hôte entre mes bras d'un seul jour et qui repart demain." (CTV, 51) Their impending separation must have intensified the couple's mutual affection; their brief meeting must have served to strengthen their love forever. Fausta believes in her husband's love for her, yet because of the short time they were together, she naturally feels that she does not really know him: "Et je suppose que son coeur m'est ouvert, mais je sais que son esprit m'est fermé, et il ne me dit point ce qu'il pense." (CTV, 49) But Laeta reassures Fausta of her husband's lasting concern for her: "Mais il t'aime, tu le sais." (CTV, 52) Although Fausta realizes that the enforced separation from her loved one makes him as a

stranger to her, her heroic self-sacrifice enables her to remember that she and her husband harbored no reservations to their marriage vows. They would accept whatever circumstances life offered:

Mais que m'importe ce visage fermé et ce sourire
ambigu et ce cœur qui ne se livre pas!
Et moi, est-ce que je lui livre le mien?
Nous ne fîmes pas ces conditions, le jour de nos
épousailles.

(CTV, 55)

To her husband, as well as to herself, the bond of marriage is sacred and weathers any difficulty which may beset them.

Repeatedly, in Le Soulier de Satin, the figure of Don Pélage appears as the loyal, but unloved husband, the faithful spouse ever witnessing to the sacredness of his marital union with Prouhèze.¹⁰ He does not seem as one who is obstinately self-righteous but rather as one who respects the ties binding man and wife. Although he may regret his mistake to have married a young woman as an elderly man, he knows that he cannot in conscience release Prouhèze.

Croyez-vous que je n'aie pas l'âme assez grande
pour l'affranchir, s'il eut dépendu de moi sans crime?
Oui, mais ce que Dieu a joint, l'homme ne peut le
séparer.
Ce n'est pas l'amour qui fait le mariage mais le
consentement. . . .en présence de Dieu dans la foi.

(SS, II, 3)

Despite all trials, marriage is utterly irrevocable and he, as a husband bound by the sacrament, must honor its claims until his last breath:

Jusqu'à la fin de moi-même, jusqu'à la dernière
parcelle de ce consentement que deux êtres sont capables
de se donner l'un à l'autre,
Bon gré, mal gré,
Cela qu'elle m'a donné, je ne pourrais le lui rendre,
quand je le voudrais.

(SS, II, 3)

¹⁰Don Camille whom Prouhèze marries after the death of Pélage and Mésa of Partage de Midi, also experience the sorrow of non-requested love.

Previous to his marriage, Pelage tried to do all he could to make it a good one: he prayed, he asked for guidance, he placed his cares in the hands of his life-long protectress, the Mother of God. He truly loved Prouheze and wished to give her peace and joy. Yet, he failed; Prouheze does not love him and seeks affection elsewhere. Anxiously, he asks himself: "Pour l'epouser est-ce l'amour ou l'intelligence qui me faisaient faute?" (SS, II, 3) Now, in conscience, Pelage cannot let Prouheze run astray; he must bear judgment on her actions; "Ne savez-vous pas que je suis un juge?" (SS, II, 3) His duty is to remain with her and to be devoted to her while seeking a means to keep justice intact. To Dona Honoria, he exclaims:

Ne suis-je point son mari? n'ai-je point mission
de l'assister? l'abandonnerai-je dans son agonie?

.....
Menez-moi a sa chambre.

(SS, II, 3)

Pelage's solution, of course, to keep Prouheze out of an illegitimate union, is to offer her guardianship of the fortress at Mogador. Separation of the lovers at any cost lies at the basis of the plan. He thus brings out the inclusion of this painful factor so vital to the development of Prouheze's love.

Man's final role on this second level, is that of "l'homme blesse." While on the first level, he was the agent striking out--the self-sufficient one; here, he realizes, however vaguely, that self-satisfaction does not bring total fulfillment to anyone. After Camille mockingly tells Rodrigue that love suffices unto itself, Rodrigue replies:

Et moi, je pense que rien ne suffit a l'amour!
Ah! j'ai trouve une chose si grande! C'est l'amour
qui doit me donner les clefs du monde et non pas me
les retirer!

(SS, II, 11)

The "all" of his desire reaches out more and more to embrace some irresistible good which always draws away temptingly from his grasp. Rodrigue's brother, the

Jesuit, describes this "homme blessé":

Et déjà Vous lui avez appris le désir mais il
ne se doute pas encore ce que c'est que d'être désiré.
Apprenez-lui que Vous n'êtes pas le seul à pouvoir
être absente! Liez-le par le poids de cet autre être
sans lui si beau qui l'appelle à travers l'intervalle!
Faites de lui un homme blessé parce qu'une fois en
cette vie il a vu la figure d'un ange!

(SS, I, 1)

The Jesuit Father prays further that Rodrigue be wounded and hurt by the very disorder which brings him so much pleasure. The irregularity of his life must in itself provide the wedge to crack open the walls barring salvation: "Et s'il désire le désordre, un tel désordre qu'il implique l'ébranlement et la fissure de ces murailles autour de lui qui barraient le salut." (SS, I, 1)

Very humbly, man acknowledges that woman has found his vulnerable point, that he is wounded, and that he is forced to acknowledge a paradise other than the earthly one so pleasing to his senses:

O femme, tu l'as découverte, cette place que tu
ne pouvais en moi atteindre que les yeux fermés! la
voilà donc au fond de moi, cette blessure que tu ne
pouvais me faire que les yeux fermés!
C'est toi qui m'ouvres le paradis et c'est toi
qui m'empêches d'y rester.

(SS, II, 14)

Rodrigue acknowledges further, that he cannot yet gain access to his newly found paradise for he needs to be purified, cauterized until his flame shines clear and bright. He must wait until he can face God alone. His love of woman gives warmth but no light; and this pleasant warmth destroys LOVE through love:

Ah! c'est en cette blessure que je te retrouve!
C'est par elle je me nourris de toi comme la lampe fait
de l'huile,
De cette huile dont brûlera éternellement cette
lampe qui ne réussit pas à en faire de la lumière.

(SS, II, 14)

The characteristics of "l'homme blessé," are manifested in Fausta's husband also. Exiled from his homeland, separated from his wife, sent on a hopeless mission, he wears a mask moulded with a forced smile:

Ah, que je revoie encore ce visage caressant et fermé, et ce frère qui ne peut quitter le masque, et ce sourire lentement sur ses lèvres, terrible à voir! Nous seuls savons ce que nous avons souffert.

(CTV, 48)

And if this man does return from his desperate mission, he will face a painful homecoming to a world changed in his absence. Fausta will have advanced to a purer love for she will have realized the vanity of earthly things and earthly loves. She will say to him then: "Tout est prêt, tout est mûr, tout est vain." (CTV, 67) And he will inquire of her: "Est-ce là cette Fausta que j'ai aimée? Où est le printemps? Où est la couleur de l'enfance?" The purified spouse, deepened by sorrow, matured as the golden wheat of late autumn will respond: "Il n'y a plus que de l'or! C'est moi, ô mon époux!" (CTV, 67) Caught up into woman's more penetrating spiritual vision, then, man is diverted from passion, force, and pleasure in order to embrace honor, duty, and suffering.¹¹

For the woman, the second level of love is one of movement. Never static, her love vacillates through three stages of expression. Now entwined in matter, now soaring spirit-like, now compromising both matter and spirit, it oscillates and often teeters precariously on its delicate balance wheels. The process of sublimation becomes slow and tedious when it is not so much a question of spiritualizing sensuality, but of changing its object. Yet, there is a faintly discernible movement forward and upward as love, still unpurified, advances toward spiritual heights.

Woman gradually forsakes her role of receptor to become the agent instrumental in man's well-being. The plainly physical is abandoned as the light and dignity of her spirit assumes ascendancy. Gaining at least partial possession of herself, she is able to give of herself while knowing that this giving must ever remain on a spiritual plane separate from earthly aspirations. Several leit-

¹¹The problem was also treated by Gabriel Marcel in Le Mort de demain.

motifs emerge from these considerations: separation; self-donation; personal dignity; instrumentality; all of which transform love into charity.

The theme of separation is perhaps most characteristic of woman's decision to assume her destined role. After Prouhèze's frantic journey to join Rodrigue at his bedside, she never meets him. Although there seems to be no exterior circumstance preventing their meeting, Prouhèze never fulfills the object of her flight to Doña Honoria's castle. Instead, she meets her husband there, avows her fidelity to him, and obeys his order to leave for Mogador. In these actions, lies her greatness. Conquering her fear of Pélage, rising above her passion for Rodrigue, obeying without love, she accepts separation from her lover forever. Paradox seems to be the major vehicle of communicating the separation theme, for the separation implied by Claudel is in itself a paradox. Eternal union in God is to be brought about by personal separation, wherefore "non nubent neque nubentur." As both lovers sail away, the figure of St. James, identified with the constellation of Orion, marks their departure:

Je vois les sillons que font deux âmes qui
se fuient à la fois et se poursuivent. . . .
.
Un homme, une femme, tous deux me regardent
et pleurent.

(SS, II, 6)

Separated from earth, the lovers begin to perceive eternity. The paradox of souls who flee and yet follow each other is resumed in subsequent lines. Physical union is renounced definitively, yet union of spirit is still an aspiration: "Quand la terre ne sert qu'à vous séparer, c'est au ciel que vous retrouverez vos racines." (SS, II, 6)

The constellation also represents the paradoxical union-separation of the two lovers. It serves as a link between the two hemispheres which separate Rodrigue and Prouhèze. Both can look up (symbol of eternal aspirations), to see the constellation; united to it, they are linked to each other as instruments

of mutual sanctification and salvation.

Moi, phare entre les deux mondes, ceux qui
l'abîme sépare n'ont qu'à me regarder pour se trouver
ensemble.

.....
Vous me retrouvez comme un point de repère. En
moi vos deux mouvements s'unissent au mien qui est
éternel.

(SS, II, 6)

Whereas Prouhèze's first separation from Rodrigue was the result of her hesitant submission to her husband's order, her next separation was fully willed and deliberate. It was her decision alone to send away Rodrigue without seeing him on the occasion of his official visit to Mogador. In the king's message brought by Rodrigue, Prouhèze was offered the possibility of abandoning Mogador to return to Spain. Rodrigue was most interested in this proposal, for although he knew that he and Prouhèze must remain apart, the prospect of her being with her husband instead of with his rival, Don Camille, was less distressing to him. In addition, he looked forward to personally bringing her back to Spain, for then, he could be with her at least a short time on the same vessel. Prouhèze, however, refuses the king's counsel and chooses to remain guardian of the fortress. Her short, explicit reply: "Je reste. Partez," reflects her determination to remain separated from Rodrigue despite his desperate pleas which she must have heard ringing out in the stony silence of the great halls. Yet, Rodrigue refuses to call her a third time even though Don Camille indicates that she might weaken and come to him. He acquiesces to the divine law which forbids their union: "Est-ce moi qui ai écrit sur la pierre cette grande Loi qui nous sépare?" (SS, II, 9)

The double shadow, found in Scene thirteen, is the decisive symbol of the union-separation motif. Being composed of both the shadows of Prouhèze and of Rodrigue as a result of one single merging image on a wall, this shadow is the only one in the "Place of Shadows" which cannot claim a master. Having come

into existence, it cannot cease to be, yet its constituent parts will never be joined again. In complaining tones, it bemoans its fate:

Et la reconnaissance de lui avec elle ne fut pas plus prompte que le choc et la soudure aussitôt de leurs âmes et de leurs corps sans une parole et que mon existence sur le mur.

Maintenant je porte accusation contre cet homme et cette femme par qui j'ai existé une seconde seule pour ne plus finir et par qui j'ai été imprimée sur la page de l'éternité!

(SS, II, 13)

Separation is further reiterated in staccato beats by the use of the word, j'amaïs, which figures in six anaphoric verses continuing the essential paradox of never, occurring forever:

.....J'amaïs!
J'amaïs, Prouhèze!

.....
J'amaïs! c'est là du moins une espèce
d'éternité avec nous qui peut tout de suite
commencer.

J'amaïs je ne pourrai plus cesser d'être sans
lui et j'amaïs il ne pourra plus cesser d'être
sans moi.

(SS, II, 14)

The subsequent passage indicates the means of separation and the reason for it. Marriage vows are the immediate obstacle between Prouhèze and her lover. At first, Don Pélage was the impediment; at his death, Don Camille becomes the legal barrier by his marriage to Prouhèze.¹² According to the view presented, the marriage partner, while unloved, still affords Prouhèze the necessary stabilizing force which she needs to forgo adultery:

Il y a quelqu'un pour toujours de la part de
Dieu qui lui interdit la présence de mon corps.
Parce qu'il l'aurait trop aimé. . . .

(SS, II, 14)

¹²The marriage between Camille and Prouhèze was one of expediency due to their peculiar situation at Mogador. Furthermore, Camille used his threatened apostasy as blackmail to force Prouhèze into marriage. In Le Père Humilié, Pensée and Orso also contract a marriage to avoid scandal.

Prouhèze realizes that Rodrigue would lose himself in his passion for her if he were given free rein to do so. Earthly separation therefore is her only recourse: "Le connais-tu à present que l'homme et la femme ne pouvaient s'aimer ailleurs que dans le paradis?" (SS, II, 14)

Separation characterizes Fausta particularly as the young wife whose love has been consummated but who must remain apart from her husband.¹³ At first, she resents this unavoidable circumstance but struggles to bear it. Little by little, she becomes aware of its hidden value and even of its importance. Her pain, her suffering, her longing merit for her the grace of insight which purifies her view of life. She comes to see wealth, her native land, human love on different planes until she herself rises to become mature as the ripening harvest about her. In her hesitation to accept the separation, though, Fausta is similar to Prouhèze on the first level when she reluctantly assented to go to Mogador. Fausta could not bear the thought of her husband's departure. With Laeta, she sings in a delicate counterpoint, her feelings for the beloved:

Laeta: Il ne sort pas du jardin . . .
 Fausta: Celui qu'une femme y retient . . .
 Laeta: Avec un lien très étroit . . . ;
 Fausta: La paire de ses bras . . .

(CTV, 39)

She is eager for his return: "Va-t-il revenir demain?" (CTV, 19) She despairs to recapture the happiness that was hers but for a single moment: "Tout passe qui a commencé;" (CTV, 20), this happiness which reached its summit and could wish for nothing more: "Quand tout atteint le sommet et demande à n'être plus. . . ." (CTV, 20) Her beauty will fade quickly and her husband is gone in the flower of her youth: "Demain nous ne serons plus belles." (CTV, 20)

¹³Other wives in Claudelian drama resemble Fausta: the selfless Lumir (Le Pain-Dur); Martha (L'Echange); who fully realized her marital responsibilities; Lala (La Ville).

However, in the depths of her being, Fausta senses the importance of separation from him and seeks to plumb its eternal mystery:

Chante, explique,
Ce qu'au fond de mon coeur je comprends déjà
Obscurément, comment ce moment unique,
Suprême et le plus aigu,
Pour un moment est déjà ce qui ne passera plus.

(CTV, 21)

In the seemingly hopeless void of her loss, she yearns to find meaning:

. . . explique-leur pourquoi
Le bonheur
Est de cette heure même
Où celui que notre coeur aime nous manque.

(CTV, 22)

By means of the same luminous vowel sound [œ] in bonheur, heure, and coeur, the three elements of Fausta's position are linked together and serve to emphasize its paradoxical import. Vaguely, she realizes that happiness can be found at the very moment that her love is gone. This realization marks her acceptance of the separation which she finds so soul-searing. Within her, Fausta sees the separation lifted from an earthly plane to a more spiritual one. It marks the parting of body from soul, the freeing of the spirit for a greater liberty. The moon, located between heaven and earth, seems to be a symbol of her state as she struggles away from earthly considerations towards heavenly ones:

cette lampe qui est entre le ciel et la terre. . .
.....
Soulevant, pénétrant l'âme, appelant, dilatant,
détachant l'âme du corps . . .
.....
Du sommeil qui est entre la mort et la vie!

(CTV, 35-36)

In Le Soulier de Satin, the personified moon plays a similar role in trying to reconcile heaven and earth within the soul of Prouheze:

Je suis là de toutes parts en elle, hors d'elle,
mais la créature que j'aime, comme elle sait que ma
lumière n'est propre qu'à son obscurité!
Elle n'a plus rien à faire, elle n'est pas sans
cesse occupée à remplacer ce que la vie lui ôte,

Elle cède, elle veut bien, c'est moi qui suis
là pour la soutenir, elle sait, elle croit, elle
est close,

Elle est pleine, elle flotte, elle dort.

(SS, II, 14)

After her days of suffering and trial, Fausta like Prouhèze, dreams of regaining her lost happiness—a happiness found not on earth but in heaven:

"Après tant de jours mauvais . . . le paradis retrouvé . . . Jérusalem!" (CTV, 36-37)

In a similar anticipation, Prouhèze sees her happiness in Rodrigue's joy which will be gained only in heaven: "Mon Dieu, je verrai sa joie! Je le verrai avec vous. . . ." (SS, II, 14)

The separation of Fausta considered so far has been a separation of duty; her husband had a special mission and so was bound to leave his wife. There is also a separation by distance. Fausta is an exile from her divided country of Poland. The partition of her native land by its greedy neighbors grieves her and she longs to be among its suffering people once more. Not only is she separated from her husband, but she is apart from her beloved people. Still, she matures under this hardship, too, seeing in it, both a personal and communal sacrifice holy and pleasing to God:

Dieu l'a voulu ainsi afin qu'entre l'Est et l'Ouest,
. . . là où l'Europe s'arrache en trois morceaux,
Il y ait un sacrifice perpétuel et un peuple selon
son coeur.

(CTV, 50)

The summit of Fausta's resignation occurs when she finally sees the vanity of her futile desire for union: "C'est en vain que la distance et le sort nous divisent!" Within her own heart, her Chambre intérieure, she finds her husband once more; for there, they both are protected from the ravages of space and time.

Laeta: Tout est soumis au temps.

Fausta: Excepté cependant . . .

.

.Le coeur qui lui donne naissance.

(CTV, 53)

Wherever her husband goes, Fausta is with him in spirit, sustaining his presence and existence, within her forever:

Je n'ai qu'à rentrer dans mon coeur pour être
avec lui et qu'à fermer les yeux
Pour cesser d'être en ce lieu où il n'est pas.
.....
Il voyage, et je suis ici. Et où qu'il aille,
c'est moi qui lui donne à manger et qui lui permets
de vivre.

(CTV, 54)

Thus, separation leading to a kind of renouncement releases parallel streams in Fausta and in Prouhèze. The course of their love widens in suffering much as the human heart dilates when wounded. Not content to ripple lightly in shore-bound shallows, it swings out to sea to sound deeper and stronger currents rising from divine sources.

The leit-motifs of the woman's self-donation, her realization of her personal dignity and her instrumentality are co-related in this second level of love. On the first level, woman was not free to give her corporeal being which she did not really possess, and so despised her own nothingness. On the second level, by her initially enforced renunciation of bodily pleasures, she is free to give of her spirit, of her joy, of her light, and so, she exults in her resultant dignity and in her mission to lead man to God. Consequently, the substantives applied to woman on this level are wholly lofty and lyrical. She is represented principally in terms of the light image which occurs so frequently in Claudel.¹⁴ Most often, the sun, chief source of light, is representative of God and His justice; whereas, the moon reflects His mercy. This relationship is perceived in the moon's monologue scene in Le Soulier de Satin:

¹⁴Théâtre. II La Ville (Paris, 1910-1912), p. 261. As Lala leaves, Besme's home becomes filled with light and she tells him: "La porte que j'ai ouverte pour sortir à empli ta chambre de la lumière de la lune." In L'Echange, p. 215, Louis-laine sees his wife as a "lighted lamp": "Tu es comme une lampe allumée, et où tu es, il fait clair./ C'est pourquoi il arrive que j'ai peur et je voudrais me cacher de toi."

Pauvre plante! N'en a-t-elle pas eu assez tout
le jour à se défendre contre le soleil?

Il était temps que j'arrive [la lune]

.....
Dans cette lumière Toutes les créatures à la
fois, sont engloutis dans la miséricorde d'Adonai.

(SS, II, 14)

The reflected light of the stars represents perfection for they participate in the sun's magnificence. Thus, Prouhèze, "femme ensevelie dans la lumière;" "l'astre réginal;" "l'étoile;" "une splendide étoile;" appears as a being sharing in the glory of God's perfection. Furthermore, stars have always been employed as guides, as indicators of direction. In her capacity as "l'étoile," then, Prouhèze is to point out the way to God whom she reflects however obscurely.

Fausta and her companions too, play the role of fixed stars, ever pointing out the true direction in turbulent seas:

Au rebours du courant,
Nous demeurons fixes,
Rectifiant sans cesse la position.
Le cap sur ce phare caché.

(CTV, 77)

In an effective synesthetic image, the light of the star also becomes the only effective means of quenching the lover's thirst, and of refreshing his soul.

Seule l'étoile qu'elle est
Peut rafraîchir en moi cette soif affreuse.

(SS, I, 7)

The image of light is applied to Fausta too, although in a different manner. As Prouhèze gradually lifted herself up to be Rodrigue's star, so Fausta gradually emerged from the night of her misunderstanding to the golden light of recognition. As she becomes aware of the vanity of wealth, homeland, and human love, she takes on more light, much as the light increases in the dawning of a new day:

Comme le ciel qui est rouge d'abord, puis
violet, puis bleu, puis vert, et la couleur enfin
de l'or inaltérable!
Tout ce qui était de la nuit en moi est devenu
comme de l'or.

(CTV, 68)

Light floods her being as she rises towards God.

Woman is also seen under the image of "l'huile," as one supplying oil for man's burning wick of life. Considering Claudel's strong penchant for biblical imagery, "l'huile" might also represent the "oil of gladness" by which the bride draws her companions after her to the Lord; "God has anointed her with the oil of gladness After her, her neighbors shall be brought . . . into the temple of the King." (Ps. 44:8, 16) Other references specifically portray Prouhèze as "la joie," as a possessor and giver of joy: "elle contenait cette joie." (SS, I, 7) As a giver of joy and preserver of life, woman becomes a stronghold for man. If she remains faithful to her ideal of raising man up to the divine, she becomes his guardian, his haven, his recourse for arms, his source of defense. Fausta declares in no uncertain terms:

Dieu m'a posée sa gardienne.
Moi qui suis faite pour l'aider, vais-je
être son entrave?
Moi qui suis faite pour être son port, et son
arsenal, et sa tour
Vais-je être sa prison? . . .

(CTV, 56)

Fausta's spouse appears to be faithful, so his purification would seem to lie in his perilous mission and his painful separation from his wife. Rodrigue, however, requires a different type of purging. Egotistical to the core, ambitious and passionate, he must be emptied of himself before he can attain his end in God. His brother, the Jesuit priest, entreated God to show him the utter vacuity of his being when his beloved is gone. In feeling Prouhèze's absence, he would thereby apprehend the loss of the divine.¹⁵ In desiring her, he would thereby learn how to love someone other than himself. Prouhèze in turn would

¹⁵Partage de Midi (Paris, 1948): Méa also discovers divine Love by being abandoned by Ysé.

bring him to God. So, the dying priest, offering his life as his last Mass, pleads for the salvation of his wayward brother even if it must be accomplished in an oblique manner.

Apprenez-lui que Vous n'êtes pas le seul à pouvoir
être absent! Liez-le par le poids de cet autre être sans
lui si beau qui l'appelle à travers l'intervalle.

(SS, I, 1)

Prouhèze, then, is "ce visage qui détruit la mort;" (SS, I, 7); for in viewing her face fixed on high, Rodrigue will eventually destroy the deadly seeds of eternal self-damnation within him. When she leads him to understand God's absence through her own, she becomes his cross which separates his body from his soul, nailing them apart on crossed bars of wood:

Si je ne puis être son paradis, du moins je puis
être sa croix! Pour que son âme avec son corps y soit
écartelée je vaudrais bien ces deux morceaux de bois qui
se traversent!

(SS, II, 14)

Only by her self-styled role of "une Épée au travers de son coeur" (SS, I, 10), can Prouhèze present Rodrigue--torn apart and rent assunder--to God and His mercy: "C'est alors que je le donnerai à Dieu découvert et déchiré pour qu'il le remplisse dans un coup de tonnerre. . . ." (SS, II, 14)

Parallel to the figure of man who is seen as the faithful husband on this second level, there is the theme of the faithful wife. Though Prouhèze does not love Don Pélage, she does have a thought of horror in betraying him. When she met with him in Doña Honorio's castle, she showed him respect, forbearance, fidelity, and finally, obedience. Her devoted service to Don Pélage is evidenced in his reminiscences of their early married life together. When the couple first went to Africa, Prouhèze shared the perils of the voyage, the false accusations levied against them. With sword in hand, she was at his side during the tribal attacks. In going to Mogador, she accepts his proposal to defend the fortress with her very life and at the risk of her virtue. What is more important,

Prouhèze acknowledges the irrevocability of her marriage vows: "Dieu . . .
Dieu . . . une fois pour toutes . . . , une fois pour toutes" (SS, II, 4)

The faithfulness of Fausta is easily seen. In her case, the question is not of her infidelity but of her possessive attitude which excludes God or at least lessens His imprint upon her life. Still, as the faithful spouse, Fausta presents an interesting parallel with Prouhèze. Epithets characterize Fausta as patient and pensive, but she herself says that it is love that makes her so. For love of her husband, she has become an exile and has become mistress of a large estate. The predicates servir and obéir, echo her fidelity:

Et à quoi tous ces fruits de la terre,
si je n'étais ici au milieu qui tiens la huche,
et le moulin, et le pressoir? et qui ordonne tout.

(CTV, 55)

Fausta's concern with faithful service to her husband is particularly striking, for she places it above love itself as its proof: "Heureux celui qui aime, mais plus heureux celui qui sert et dont on a besoin. . . ." (CTV, 49)
Further on in the Cantate, she asserts, "Que je serve, c'est assez. . . ." (CTV, 57)

In such manner, love has been gradually purified in its journey from its first stages to the intermediate stage described so far. Its channels deepened, its shores widened, it is soon to flow into its limitless expanse of infinite love. Through separation, reluctantly accepted and then embraced, both Prouhèze and Fausta are purified. Earthly considerations of selfish pleasure are rejected while the lofty role of heavenly guide to their beloved is assumed by both. Generally faithful to their commitments, they ascend in dignity from base vessels of pleasure to become beacons of light, towers of strength and joy, instruments of purifying pain and suffering. The process of sublimation within Prouhèze and Fausta, however, is still incomplete. For in a moment of weakness and despair, Doña Prouhèze sent a letter to Rodrigue begging for deliverance. And Fausta, although in a state of readiness, does not renounce her husband forever in favor

of spiritual espousals with God. The word of ultimate renunciation has not yet been uttered by either woman on the second level of love. They remain in a Purgatory.

CHAPTER THREE

THE THIRD LEVEL OF LOVE

"Il ne demandait qu'une goutte
d'eau et toi, frère, aide-moi à lui
donner l'Océan. . . . les Eaux amères
de l'exil."

(SS, III, 8)

Silently, almost imperceptibly, the fresh, sweet streams, once confined to inland ways, empty themselves into unknown seas to mingle with their brine and there, be wholly lost. So, human love gradually changes into divine love as the sweetness of earthly pleasures gives way to the stinging salt of total renunciation. Yet, in the end, all is gained with the gaining of divine love, for all is held therein.

While on the first level of love, pleasure outweighed duty, and on the second level, the two oscillated for prominence, here, on the third level, charity is foremost. Salvation is the dominating goal and is pursued by all the protagonists. However, the search for grace is not carried out in the same manner by all. Among the dramatic figures to be considered: Don Camille; Don Rodrigue; Doña Prouhèze; and Beata, there are various spiritual levels of aspiration.

The relationship between the sexes has altered considerably; for now, woman is definitely regarded by man as his means of salvation. Man is seen as a weak figure desperately in need of a guide. Although clinging to temporal satisfaction, he nevertheless, consents to be purified by the woman he desires.

At the beginning of Le Soulier de Satin, Don Camille appeared to be a ruthless individual, bent on attaining his will with Prouhèze:

Et moi, je vais être si malheureux et si criminel, oui, je vais faire de telles choses, Dona Prouhèze, Que je vous forcerai bien de venir à moi, vous et ce Dieu que vous gardez si jalousement pour vous, comme s'il était venu pour les justes.

(SS, I, 29, 30)

When with her at Mogador, he did not hesitate to whip and torture her; nevertheless, he is somehow gripped in her power. He does not deny Prouhèze's words concerning her ascendancy over him: "Mon corps est en votre pouvoir mais votre âme est dans le mien!" (SS, III, 10) In fact, Camille readily recognizes her hold on him. He refers his salvation to her power despite her vehement disavowal of it:

Prouhèze: Avez-vous l'impertinence de penser qu'il y avait en moi quelque chose qui fut fait spécialement pour vous?

Camille: Où serait autrement le pouvoir qui me retient à vos pieds
Et qui depuis dix ans m'oblige à écouter ce coeur en vous qui bat?

(SS, III, 10)

Don Camille realizes furthermore, that his salvation depends solely upon her sanctity. However, with penetrating lucidity, he sees that Prouhèze is not yet a saint even though she has parted with Rodrigue. In his view, she has renounced him in this world only to possess him more fully in the next. Paradoxically, Camille urges Prouhèze on to perfect sanctity by total renunciation in order that he at least may escape damnation. Desperately, he entreats her to attain the holiness destined for her:

Prouhèze, je crois en vous! Prouhèze, je meurs de soif! Ah! cessez d'être une femme et laissez-moi voir sur votre visage enfin ce Dieu que vous êtes impuissante à contenir,

Et atteindre au fond de votre coeur cette eau dont Dieu vous a faite le vase!

(SS, III, 10)

In regard to Rodrigue, long years of separation from Prouhèze only served to bank the blaze of his desires. A letter from Prouhèze, delivered to him in America ten years after it was written, fanned the smouldering embers to make them

flame out once more. Hurriedly abandoning his post which he had promised to defend until death, Rodrigue sailed to answer Prouhèze's long forgotten note. In Scene Nine of the Third Day, Rodrigue and Prouhèze finally meet face to face. It is clear that Prouhèze is in command both of Mogador and of herself; Rodrigue, at the height of his career as militant conqueror, must only submit. At their meeting, they both know that they cannot belong to each other; God will not permit their union either in flesh or in spirit. Still, when Prouhèze asks Rodrigue to release her from her promise to him he is reluctant to do so. He cannot accept the necessity of his having to face God alone:

C'est l'amour qui après t'avoir interdite à
moi en ce monde présent

Me refuse aucune promesse pour l'autre.

.....
Mais à quoi sert cet amour avare et stérile
où il n'y a rien pour moi?

(SS, III, 9)

Still unable to bend Prouhèze's will, he too, as Don Camille, is reduced to hopelessly protesting his great longing for her: "Prouhèze, là où tu es, entends ce cri désespéré que depuis dix ans je n'ai cessé d'élever vers toi!" (SS, III, 9) Even to the moment of their departure, Rodrigue cannot comprehend the higher gift of grace offered Prouhèze by her total sacrifice of him.¹⁶ Though all he wants finally, is the delight of her presence and the comfort of her guidance, he acquiesces to her demand and allows her to return to the fortress. Now entirely free, Prouhèze goes to her death, leaving Rodrigue to work out his own freedom through suffering and total deprivation of the world's goods. Only after many years, aged, infirm, and despised, was he finally ready to receive Prouhèze's gift of God.

¹⁶Partage de Midi, p. 47. It is woman's role to jolt man out of his lethargy, to disturb him so deeply that he must seek out God. Ysé admits this role to Méss: "C'est pour cela que les femmes sont faites."

Frère Léon: . . . On a retiré autre chose que Dieu!
On a enchaîné l'exacteur! Tout ce qui
en vous s'accrochait misérablement aux
choses une par une et successivement!
C'est fini des oeuvres serviles! On a
mis aux fers vos membres, ces tyrans, et
il n'y a qu'à respirer pour vous remplir
de Dieu!

Rodrigue: Vous comprenez ce que je disais quand
tout à l'heure j'ai ressenti obscurément
que j'étais libre!

(SS, IV, 11)

Ideally, the third level of love involves total renunciation and final separation from the beloved. In Beata's case, this ideal is realized in fact; for as a widow she can neither hope to rejoin her husband on earth, nor can she hope to be maritally united with him in heaven.¹⁷ Form follows content in the poetical presentation of his absence, for no allusion is made to his appearance, character, or work. He is simply absent from the dramatic scene. Brief mention is made of the fact of his death, as this reference heightens the lyrical quality and dramatic tension of the verse. "L'oeil s'est fermé," Beata recalls simply. (CTV, 53) Later, she ponders the momentariness of life and its brief duration, since it vanishes as so much foam flicked away by breath in a glass: ". . . ce visage . . . n'a pas plus de solidité que l'écume du vin sur une coupe, que le souffle de celui qui va boire écarte." (CTV, 82) Her husband is gone, never to return, and yet, she knows that now he can never be far from her. His death was necessary in order that their love might live. His soul, linked to hers, remains her guide and her word. Beata hails him in undespairing faith: "Salut de nouveau, ô toi qui m'as quittée!" (CTV, 90) When Laeta indicates that all things are subject to time, Beata interrupts her to exclude absence

¹⁷Of all the Claudelian women, Violsine (L'Annonce faite à Marie), is the best prototype of Beata due to her purity, self-sacrifice, and proximity to perfection.

from the domination of time. By her resignation and embrace of the divine will with regard to her husband's death, she finds that his absence is beyond time. She can only praise the patient soul who waits for time's end. Furthermore, death has ceased to exist; as far as she is concerned, there is no one left to die: "Tout est fini pour moi de ce qui meurt." (CTV, 19)

No longing representing a common clay receptacle of sense pleasure for man, woman has risen to great heights through her purification by the various demands of love. At the end of her passage toward the infinite expanses of divine love, she has realized the call of grace both for herself and for those whom she leads. Approaching divine purity, she must cast out anything that might mar her identity with it. Her feelings and emotions, her actions and reactions are purified with ever greater delicacy. This inner conflict is seen particularly in Prouh  ze, although Beata experiences it on a much higher plane. Thus, the culminating sections of Le Soulier de Satin and La Cantate   Trois Voix, include themes of morality, asceticism, and mysticism.

Having renounced Rodrigue even in spiritual union, Prouh  ze still cannot understand Rodrigue's love for her, a married woman. Her angel explains that Rodrigue's sin in loving her would serve to teach him desire; desire for her, and ultimately, desire for God. Going one step further then, Prouh  ze ponders the validity of human love: "L'homme entre les bras de la femme oublie Dieu." (SS, III, 8) She is made to see, however, that God could not condemn what he has created, and that God associates man and woman in His own creative work through their mutual love. The angel asserts that Prouh  ze is destined only for Rodrigue's good, and that, as bait, she is to draw him to God. Beata, on the other hand, needs no assurance that human love is right and good. On the level which she has attained she knows that all of creation is good, delightful, and blessed just as its Creator Who made it: "C'est la r  alit   un instant pour nous qui  cl  t sous ces voiles fragiles et la profonde d  lice   notre   me de

toute chose que Dieu a faite!" (CTV, 24)

Nevertheless, Beata recognizes the possible entanglement of human love if man and wife exclude God from it. It is with this sentiment in mind that she can rise to the very heights and ask God to extinguish any light blinding her from the sight of Him: "Éteins promptment cette lumière qui ne me permet de voir que ton visage!" (CTV, 91) Experiences of mystical love such as these are generally not reached without much suffering and sustained sacrifice in a self-annihilating plan of asceticism. But both Prouhèze and Beata are willing to undergo any amount of purification to hollow out and increase their capacity for grace. While there are some substantives which incorporate this theme of purification, they are far outnumbered by bold, direct predicates which seem to connote the impression of self-purgation at one blow. First, there is mention of the passion and the cross which gives the resultant suffering its religious significance.¹⁸ Doña Prouhèze vows to marry Rodrigue through the cross so that their souls would be united in death. Death itself is frequently mentioned in connection with Prouhèze's act of renunciation: "Cette mort qui fera de toi une étoile, consens-tu à la recevoir de sa main?" (SS, III, 8)

In a more lyrical vein, Beata also sings of a life of sacrifice as a death. In the "Song of the Perfumes," she compares this living death to the fragrance emitted by a crushed flower. Its scent becomes "l'offrande de la mort qui commence!" (CTV, 81) The flower's quiet deliverance of its own being is alluded to as a "sacrifice" in a beautiful melodic passage which evokes other sacrifice-images of burning coals, incense, and offering:

¹⁸Théâtre II. La Ville, seconde version (Paris, 1910-1912), p. 300. Claudel often stresses the value of human suffering when it is united to Christ's. (Ivor: "C'est la douleur du Fils de l'Homme qui a voulu goûter et revêtir notre crime.") Anne Vercors in L'Annonce faite à Marie, p. 195, also sees the value of the cross: "Il n'est pas de vivre, mais de mourir, et non point de charpenter la croix, mais d'y monter, et de donner ce que nous avons en riant."

O sacrifice solennel! cavité de l'encensoir!
suspens de toute la creation avant que le soleil ait
paru, qui fume vers lui en silence!

(CTV, 81)

In the thought of both Beata and Prouhèze, their living sacrificial death can lead but to a higher life. Death will in fact, be defeated and will be resolved into life itself:

. . . la mort se perd dans la vie
Et la fleur blanche du printemps de toutes
partes s'évanouit dans le feuillage comme
une mer qui résorbe son écume.

.
La mort qui n'a pas réussi!

(CTV, 83,85)

More penitential aspects of asceticism are found in Prouhèze's words since she must expiate her former faults and sinful desires. Comparing her own state with God's great purity, she yearns for total purification so as to be united with Him more quickly: "Laisse-moi commencer ma pénitence . . . Laisse-moi n'avoir plus de corps . . . laisse-moi n'avoir plus de visage. . . ." (SS, III,8) She yearns for the cauterizing flames of suffering which will burn out any impurities¹⁹ still remaining within her: ". . . ne me sépare plus à jamais de ces flammes désirées!" (SS, III,8) She welcomes "la main meurtrière" (SS, III,8), of Rodrigue for whom she is to suffer and die.

Most of the predicates chosen by Claudel to express Prouhèze's purification are evocative of sacrifice in the original biblical manner. Abraham, about to plunge his knife into Isaac, can be visualized when Prouhèze calls on Rodrigue: "lève ta main meurtrière! sacrifie cette chose qui est à toi!" (SS, III, 8)

¹⁹L'Annonce faite à Marie (Paris, 1927), p. 135. Violaine also realized the need for absolute purity: "Dieu est avare et ne permet qu'aucune créature soit allumée,/ Sans qu'un peu d'impureté s'y consume,/ La sienne où celle qui l'entoure, comme la braise de l'encensoir qu'on attise!"

Further images of sacrificial fires licking at their victims are evoked by the predicates: fondre; dévorer; brûler; détruire.

Non, non, ne me sépare plus à jamais de ces flammes désirées! Il faut que je leur donne à fondre et à dévorer cette carapace affreuse, il faut que mes liens brûlent, il faut que je leur tienne à détruire toute mon affreuse cuirasse, tout cela que Dieu n'a pas fait, tout ce roide bois d'illusion et de péché, cette idole, cette abominable poupée que j'ai fabriquée à la place de l'image vivante de Dieu dont ma chair portait le sceau empreint!

(SS, III, 8)

Purification willingly chosen is advocated by Prouhèze both for herself and for Rodrigue whom she must guide. She wishes to be as a candle giving up its own being to banish the darkness: "Pendant qu'il achève en ce lieu obscur sa course, laisse-moi me consumer pour lui comme une cire. . . ." (SS, III, 8) Beata, too, expresses the desire to be destroyed as a sacrifice when she remarks in her "Song of the Rose": "Ah, l'important n'est pas de vivre, mais de mourir et d'être consommé!" (CTV, 24) Active purgation assumed by self is counselled by Prouhèze as she exhorts Rodrigue to be generous in suffering: "Dépouille-toi! Jette tout! Donne tout afin de tout recevoir!" (SS, III, 13) This type of purification is more noticeable in Beata's case, however. Her language is equal to that of the greatest mystics intent on becoming nothing in God's sight. Death is mentioned often, as it is the dying to self or mortification which is particularly necessary as the dark night of the soul. Beata has a vivid grasp of this truth when she states: "Plus une chose meurt, plus elle arrive au bout d'elle-même." (CTV, 24)

In the "Song of Perfumes," there are still more predicates which express the need of dying in order to live. Incense can be prepared only if aromatic grasses are cut, only if the flower itself gives of itself. So, it is only in like manner that the soul can be freed to wend its way towards God, to be released as sweet fragrance in His sight.

Comment l'esprit nous serait-il perceptible,
 l'âme elle-même à l'âme directe et perceptible,
 Sans ces fleurs qui le dégagent en expiant
 et l'incens de ces herbes coupees.

(CTV, 81)

A final image from this same song of Beata alludes to the annihilation of self in order to be fructified. Every flower has within itself the potency to develop a fruit, but for the fruit to be formed, the flower must be destroyed. Life too, must be annihilated in time so that it can bear fruit in timelessness.

Laeta: La fleur inséparée du fruit
 Beata: De la Vie toujours la même
Dans le temps anéanti!

(CTV, 70, 71)

The starkest consequences of self-sacrifice are embraced by both Prouhèze and Beata in generous correspondence to God's call. In typical fashion, Prouhèze impulsively asks for her immediate death once she recognizes its value: "Frère il faut faire mourir cette pauvre creature vite et ne pas souffrir qu'elle soit si bête davantage." (SS, III, 8)

Beata, already far advanced in the mystical way, acknowledges the deadening of her senses and the surging of the spirit within her:

Voici le soleil bientôt qui apparaît pour
 se faire rendre témoignage que la chair est morte
 et que l'esprit vit.
 Et avant même qu'il se soit montré,
 L'âme de la terre se dégage et fume vers lui.

(CTV, 79)

Because of her faithfulness in corresponding to grace, Beata has begun, even on earth, to taste its effects of peace and light in her soul. She exclaims as in ecstasy: "... Ah, quelle paix! quelle lumière!" (CTV, 61) In parallel melodic verses, she with Laeta compare the soul, thus fructified with grace, to ripened grains of wheat:

Laeta: L'épi épais, le grain plein de lait encore,
 Lourd et presque mûr.

.....
 Beata: L'âme sans support qui penche,
 Lourde et presque mûre.

(CTV, 45)

Having detached herself from earth, Beata can now run in the way of the Lord, and indeed, she delights in doing so, for her whole being is set in motion by the waters of grace which the Rhone River symbolizes:

Je suis l'hôte de ce fleuve ininterrompu.

.....
Et qu'il est facile en plein courant d'être détaché et de ne tenir à rien!

(OTV, 88)

For Prouhèze and Beata, the process of purification is complete. After gaining Rodrigue's permission to die, Prouhèze returns to Mogador where she and Camille mean to blow up the fortress in order to keep it from the Moslem insurgents.²⁰ She keeps to her previous decision of renouncing Rodrigue in spirit as well as in flesh when she bid him farewell forever. "Adieu donc ici-bas! adieu, adieu, mon bien-aimé! Rodrigue, Rodrigue là-bas, adieu pour toujours!" In this farewell, Prouhèze speaks as if she were on earth--ici-bas, at the same time that she is in heaven--là-bas, thus underlining her total renunciation. Her divinely appointed task of leading Rodrigue, however, has not ceased with her death. She has led him to the shores of divine love; and, as these waters have cured her, and have stripped off her earthly desires, so they will also deliver Rodrigue.

Prouhèze: Il ne demandait qu'une goutte d'eau et toi, frère, aide-moi à lui donner l'Océan.

L'Ange: N'est-ce pas lui qui l'attend de l'autre côté de cet horizon mystique si longtemps
Qui fut celui de la vieille humanité?
ces eaux que tu as tellement désirées, ne sont-
ce pas elles qui sont en train de te guérir de
la terre?

(SS, III, 8)

Rodrigue has but to follow Prouhèze's light reflected in the moving waters to find his end in God:

²⁰Ysé and Amalric have a similar plan in Le Partage de Midi.

Prouhèze: Pour l'y tirer, comment faire, maintenant que tu n'a plus mon corps comme amorce?
 L'Ange: Non plus ton corps, mais ton reflet sur les Eaux amères de l'exil,
ton reflet sur les eaux mouvantes de l'exil sans cesse évanoui et reformé.
 (SS, III, 8)

As final proof that purification is complete, there is the symbol of a change in light by which the golden gleam of human love becomes snow white as divine love. In a mysterious fashion, woman is transformed by the divine life within her.²¹ Rodrigue recognizes the transformation in Prouhèze: "L'amour a achevé son oeuvre sur toi, ma bien-aimée, et le rire sur ton visage a été remplacé par la douleur et l'or pour te couronner par la couleur mystérieuse de la neige." (SS, III, 13)

This same light image is paralleled in a passage of La Cantate à Trois Voix in which Fausta extols the spiritual beauty of a woman going to meet her heavenly Father and Spouse. She carries with her a rich harvest, for she has died to self, and her flower is fructified. Fausta only recognizes this white light, but Besta is transfigured with it:

Et voici le jour bientôt de la femme qui est
 montée vers Dieu, revêtue d'une grande moisson, la
 moisson, qui ruisselle de ses épaules,
 Et dans le moment qu'elle passe à son Epoux
 et à son Père
 Ce qui était comme de l'or devient comme de la
neige!

(CTV, 68-69)

²¹L'Annonce faite à Marie, p. 93. Jacques perceives the change in Violaine: "Ah, ne tourne pas vers moi ce visage qui n'est plus de ce monde!"

CONCLUSION

Throughout these pages, the basis of relationship between pleasure and duty has been underlined in reference to the progress of love from concupiscence to caritas,²² or love centered on God. As the individual gradually replaces sensuous drives with sublime desires, he becomes more cognizant of the duties basic to human dignity and consequently, he becomes ever more eager to relinquish urges not consonant with his higher aspirations. While this present work did not propose to study the dramatic motivation of the protagonists in their movement from pleasure to duty, it would seem that a brief consideration would be appropriate.

Individuals, given intelligence and free will, must act from motives in order to fulfill their human capacities. This point is mentioned because criticism is leveled against some Claudelian characters who do not seem to act as individuals but as puppets, drawn along by the manipulation of their creator. Such criticism is not generally applied to figures in lyrical pieces as La Cantate à Trois Voix, for poetry tends to reveal insight and intuition of truth rather than the process of attaining it. Consequently, the figures of Laeta, Fausta, and Beata are excluded here.

Attention will be centered on Prouheze; for it is she who advances through the three levels of love delineated, much more obviously than the others. The question may be asked: are her moral choices motivated, or are they contrived to conform with the predetermined theme?

Motivation is generally shown in drama by the character's gradual understanding or enlightenment concerning the events confronting him. Normal thought

²²Riordan, op. cit., (above note 2), v. p. 145, n. 75.

processes and events, intuition, dialogue, all reveal the character's development. While it is true that "... we must not demand when we approach dramatic character, too limited or too immediate correspondence with character as we meet it in life,"²³ still it would not be unjust to criticize the use of a talking shadow, a constellation, or of an angel as a means to enable the character to develop. This situation exists in the case of Prouhèze. It is the shadow which announces the "spiritual marriage" of Prouhèze and Rodrigue; the constellation which reveals Prouhèze's acceptance of her husband's demand that she go to Mogedor; it is the guardian angel which unfolds Prouhèze's Beatrician role to her. In none of these instances does Prouhèze show by intuition, reason, reaction, or dialogue, her motivation to change from one pattern of action to another. She simply appears at each level or stage of readiness at seemingly arbitrary points in the drama.

As a dramatic figure, Prouhèze seems strained and rigid as if she were conforming to a pre-arranged hypotheses which Claudel sets about to prove. Once the hypothesis is established, Prouhèze marches on to its definable beat, while the possibility of grace's intervention seems precluded. The fact that Prouhèze delivers her slipper to the Virgin that she may be deterred in her evil intentions at the same time that she is adamant in her determination to meet Rodrigue, indicates, perhaps, that she is powerless to act in her own right. Puppet-like, she seems to advance according to a plan imposed from without, rather than according to the dictates of her own inner being. Again, in the incident involving her decision not to see Rodrigue as he lay dying, there seems to be a pre-ordained plan directing the action. Her motivation is not indicated; her decision is too abrupt and too definitive to be consonant with her previous passionate flight to

²³Una Ellis-Femor, Shakespeare the Dramatist and Other Papers (New York, 1961), p. 22.

Rodrigue's bedside. The analogy of God using Prouhèze as bait on a fishing line is true enough within the play, but it does not leave room for true human emotions or reactions. Love cannot be separated from the lovers who experience its emotions, nor can persons be considered apart from their situations.

Furthermore, it would seem to be a weakness in dramatic structure to allow exterior supernatural elements to direct the critical moments of a drama. Inherent dramatic principles would thereby be violated. A fine English critic has stated: "So far as his characters allow him, a dramatist may express with a measure of directness his emotion and his poetic delight. But those larger inferences from his experience which we call his reading of life can only as we have said, be expressed, implicitly, in terms of character and event and the relation between the two."²⁴ Consistent revelation by extra-human agents, the situation found in Le Soulier de Satin, is far from being implicit. The same critic also maintains: ". . . the dramatist's is an impersonal art; its ways are secret and his thoughts are often hidden in those ways."²⁵ Considered in this light, Claudel's art is faulty.

However, the case for Claudel need not end with this judgment. In L'Introduction à quelques oeuvres, Claudel himself said the following in regard to his works: "Tandis que dans la vie on croit que ce sont les caracteres qui expliquent l'action, ici c'est l'action réglée d'avance qui implique les caractères."²⁶ So far, Claudelian drama has been considered as secular drama, but if it were looked upon as religious drama, the above judgment would be altered. Religious drama may be described as: "a form of drama in which the real focus is not the Tragic Hero but

²⁴Ellis-Femor, p. 10.

²⁵Ibid., p. 6.

²⁶Claudel, Les Cahiers des amis des Livres, I (1920), 17.

the divine background."²⁷ The following principles of religious drama given by H. D. F. Kitto, can be discovered in Le Soulier de Satin:

... it is a form of drama which can use naturalism, but can and frequently does set it at defiance; that it can draw character sharply, but does not exist in order to study and display character; it can indeed almost entirely dispense with character-drawing. The individual, however vividly he may be drawn, however complex and delicate may be the relations between him and the other individuals in the play, never absorbs all our attention; he never, so to speak, grows in his creator's hand. Religious drama contains gods as well as men, and where gods are present they must take precedence. Only when the human drama in the foreground is seen against the background of divine action is the structure and significance of the play truly seen.²⁸

Under these aspects, then, Prouh  ze is not free to be otherwise portrayed. Although she is a combination of contradictories, she is more or less forced to assume them by reason of the overall action and theme of the play. Claudel did accomplish what he set out to do--to show man symbolically drawn along by the ebb and flow of God's divine love working subtly in its cosmic mystery.

Journal of Marketing and Art Criticism, VIII (1957), 80-89.

Wells, William. *The Church's World: A Study of Love in its Literary Expression*. London, 1948.

Wheeler, Robert. *Images and Styles in Twentieth Century French Literature*. Washington, D.C., 1957.

Kitto, H. D. F. *Form and Meaning in Drama*. New York, n.d.

Andrieu, Jacques. *Le Drame de Paul Claudel*. Paris, 1947.

_____. *Le G  nie de Paul Claudel*. Paris, 1953.

Barthelme, Jacques. *Creative Intuition in Art and Poetry*. New York, 1955.

Johnson, Sister Francis Ellen. *The Concept of Love in the Transcendentalist Literary Revival*. Washington, D.C., 1951.

Salas, Barbara. "Paul Claudel: Prisoner and the Satin Slipper," *Essays*, VII (1955), 171-180.

²⁷H. D. F. Kitto, Form and Meaning in Drama (New York, n. d.), p. 231.

²⁸Ibid., p. 238.

LIST OF WORKS CONSULTED

- Beaumont, Ernest. The Theme of Beatrice in the Plays of Claudel. London, 1954.
- Chiari, Joseph. The Poetic Drama of Paul Claudel. New York, 1954.
- Claudel, Paul. L'Annonce faite à Marie. Gallimard, 1927.
 _____ . La Cantate à Trois Voix. Gallimard, 1948.
 _____ . Le Pain Dur. Gallimard, 1918.
 _____ . Partage de Midi. Mercure de France, 1948.
 _____ . Le Père Humilié. Gallimard, 1920.
 _____ . Positions et Propositions. Gallimard, 1928.
 _____ . Le Soulier de Satin. Gallimard, 1929.
 _____ . Théâtre. Mercure de France, 1910-1912.
- Colleye, Hubert. La Poésie Catholique de Claudel. Liege, 1946.
- Ellis-Fermor, Una. Shakespeare the Dramatist and Other Papers. New York, 1961.
- Forkey, Leo O. "A Baroque 'Moment' in the French Contemporary Theatre," The Journal of Aesthetics and Art Criticism, XVIII (1957), 80-89.
- Fowlie, Wallace. The Clown's Grail: A Study of Love in its Literary Expression. London, 1948.
- Hatzfeld, Helmut. Trends and Styles in Twentieth Century French Literature. Washington, D.C., 1957.
- Kitto, H. D. F. Form and Meaning in Drama. New York, n.d.
- Madsule, Jacques. Le Drame de Paul Claudel. Paris, 1947.
 _____ . Le Génie de Paul Claudel. Paris, 1933.
- Maritain, Jacques. Creative Intuition in Art and Poetry. New York, 1955.
- Riordan, Sister Francis Ellen. The Concept of Love in the French-Catholic Literary Revival. Washington, D.C., 1952.
- Selna, Barbara. "Paul Claudel: Prison and the Satin Slipper," Renaissance, VII (1955), 171-180.



